

AMCEN-15-REF-13

**FRAMEWORK FOR THE COORDINATION MECHANISM OF THE
CHAPTERS OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

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Background and Mandate

At the Fifth Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held in Gaborone from 17th to 18th October 2013, there was a recognition that Africa needs to prepare better to engage within the multilateral set-up. In this regard, the Ministers decided:

- a) *To strengthen coherence and increase engagement between Member State diplomatic Missions in Addis Ababa, Geneva, Nairobi and New York on sustainable development matters;*
- b) *To mandate the African group of CPR to UNEP, in collaboration with African permanent missions¹ in Addis Ababa, Geneva and New York, to prepare and advance a **common strategy for Africa's engagement** with UNEA to be considered by AMCEN at its 15th session;*

It is against this background that the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Nairobi, the ADC reached out to the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) in Addis Ababa and the African Group in New York, with a view to working together on a common strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration and the exchange of views and information among the different chapters of the African diplomatic corps.

Rationale:

The issues and challenges affecting human kind continue to grow in and complexity, requiring concerted effort by the family of nations. The recognition that, one nation, acting alone may not effectively influence the course and direction of international affairs, has given rise to the formation of alliances and groupings. Operating within the framework of such groupings and alliances, countries, especially developing ones, are able to increase their voice and ability to influence world affairs.

African countries recognize that by working together they have a better opportunity to influence regional and global affairs. This can only be realized when actions and decisions are based on sound information, common objectives and coordinated strategy for engagement.

OBJECTIVES

To strengthen the role and effective engagement of all African delegations in the work of the UN, and the African Union processes, through effective interaction, collaboration and exchange of relevant information among the chapters of the African group.

Strategic objectives:

- i) *Strengthening the working relationship between Nairobi, Addis, Geneva and New York duty stations in promoting common African positions*
- ii) *Supporting the decision making processes within the AU, and the implementation of those decisions by leveraging international instruments and decisions;*
- iii) *Strengthening the Africa's negotiating capacity within the multilateral system;*
- iv) *Mobilising other regions to support Africa's positions and candidates, including through reciprocal arrangements;*
- v) *Providing and soliciting relevant information to the capitals to support engagement in the processes and implementation of the outcomes; and,*
- vi) *Nurturing a strong working relationship amongst Africa's diplomatic community.*

Main actors:

- The African Group in New York
- The African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi
- The Permanent Representative Committee in Addis Ababa
- African Group Chapters

Operational Modalities:

The Mechanism will operate through identified focal points at each of the participating chapters, with the responsibility of acting as a conduit for information sharing, under the guidance of the chapter leadership. The focal point will be an officer at technical/operative level and will be supported by a substantive deputy.

Functions of the focal points:

1. To receive and disseminate information, requests for information, position papers, outcomes of intergovernmental processes and any other relevant data.
2. To notify the chapter leadership of requests and information that has been presented to the chapter.
3. To liaise with the technical committee(s) of the chapter in the processing of appropriate action or responses
4. To facilitate the storage, and retrieval of information;
5. To facilitate the transmission of appropriate responses to the other chapters as appropriate.
6. To participate in consultations on how to improve the operational modalities of the mechanism under the guidance of the Chapter leadership.

Implementation:

Each Chapter will identify two officers and designate one as the focal point and the other as the deputy. The participating chapters will exchange the details of the focal points and their deputies.

Means of Implementation:

The activities of the focal points will be in most cases cost neutral. In the rare circumstances where activities would require some limited financing, the chapters will, on a case by case basis, identify a financing mechanism or seek some financial support from partners. Such activities would only be undertaken once funding is assured, in the absence of resources, alternatives arrangements will be utilized.