

Parties committed to a pollution-free Africa through the implementation of the Bamako Convention

Abidjan, 1 February 2018 - Parties to the Bamako Convention adopted a set of decisions. They also adopted, by consensus, a negotiated Ministerial Declaration through which they reaffirmed their commitment to make Africa a pollution-free continent.

Over 35 countries, experts, private sector, civil society, regional economic bodies participated in the three-days 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 that took place in the Ivorian Capital, Abidjan from 30 to 1 February 2018.

The common message from all Parties has been that urgent actions and effective mechanisms should be developed at national and regional levels to effectively implement the Bamako Convention.

While Parties committed to secure total ban of imports to Africa and control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, they also reaffirmed to take concrete actions for effective implementation of adopted decisions at past and present conference.

“The Bamako convention is an important instrument which demonstrates the will of Africans to protect their health and environment. It is an instrument that can help us have a Continent free of all forms of pollution. However, to achieve the objectives of the Convention, we need to double our efforts and continue to create more initiatives,” said H.E. Anne Desire Oulotto, Minister of Sanitation, Environment and Sustainable Development of Cote d’Ivoire and President of the COP-2 of The Bamako convention.

“We should give this Convention all the necessary support and resources so it can play its role in achieving an Africa without pollution,” she added.

Parties also reaffirmed their support for the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes through effective implementation of the Bamako Convention. They reiterated the need to align the Bamako convention to other global chemicals conventions, especially Basel Convention.

“The commitment by Parties to a Free-Pollution Africa through the strengthening of the Bamako Convention will ultimately reinforce Africa’s role and commitment to the global chemical agenda, the Agenda 2063 as well as the Sustainable Development Goals,” said Juliette Biao, Regional Director and Representative to Africa, UN Environment.

Synergies and cooperation with other chemicals and wastes related Conventions and Frameworks will foster and promote effective implementation of the Bamako Convention. The Bamako Convention complements Basel Convention by covering hazardous waste such radioactive substances and special waste generated by shipments which contain heavy metals. Such provision provided by Bamako convention, if effectively implemented, would prevent Africa from disasters such the Probo Koala toxic waste dumping in 2006 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.

Parties decided to establish the Secretariat of the Convention in Mali.

Note to editors:

About the Bamako Convention:

The Bamako Convention was negotiated by twelve nations of the Organization of African Unity at Bamako, Mali in January 1991, and came into force in 1998. It prohibits the import to Africa and ocean and inland water dumping or incineration of hazardous wastes; establishes the precautionary principle; and provides for the sound management of these wastes within the continent.

Ministerial Declaration and Decisions are available at:

<https://www.unenvironment.org/events/conference/second-conference-parties-bamako-convention>

Probo Koala Incident: In 2006, a Panama-registered cargo tanker, chartered by Trafigura, a commodities trading multinational, dumped over 500 cubic meters of highly toxic waste in Abidjan, killing 17 people and poisoning thousands. An environmental audit of the sites affected by the toxic waste was launched at the COP-2. Full report is available at:

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/un-environment-releases-independent-audit-sites-affected-toxic-waste>

Koko, Nigeria incident: In 1988, Italian businessmen illegally dumped over 2000 drums, sacks, and containers full of hazardous wastes in a small fishing village in southern Nigeria. The waste was claimed by the dealer to be fertilizers that would help poor farmers, but instead it turned into a nightmare. Few months later the containers started leaking causing stomach upset, headache, failing sight and death to the local community. The area around the dumpsite was rendered inhabitable and 500 residents were evacuated. People in the Koko village still remember this accident as '*drums of death*'.

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