

Africa Group's Comment on the "Revised elements for the concept of the theme of the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly"

Subcommittee Meeting 14 June 2018

The African Group would like to take this opportunity to welcome the efforts made by the Secretariat to provide a consolidated concept note for the theme of the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly.

Our Group also believes that thorough consultations and genuine negotiations would result in a concept note that can best represent the interest and aspirations of all Member States in the coming United Nations Environment Assembly.

Be this as it may, the African Group presents its preliminary comments on the proposed revised concept note as follows;

On Conceptual Framework

The African Group welcomes the representation of Innovative Solutions apart from technological innovation, the recognition given to indigenous knowledge management and the intent by the Secretariat to capitalize on UNEA Resolution 3/5. The Group considers such accommodation as a constructive way to reach a general agreement on the concept note for the Fourth UNEA.

However, the Group believes that the conceptual framework overlooks the multiplier effects of Innovative Solutions. Innovative Solutions increase technical capacities, attract new investments, open new markets and enhance productivity and sustainability. In this regard, the African Group calls on the Secretariat to refer to Section 2 of the document submitted by the Group on May 17th, 2018.

The conceptual framework, in its current format, is skewed towards SCP; it is imperative to develop a balanced framework that shows the linkages of the key role of innovative solutions for (a) environmental challenges and (b) sustainable consumption and production.

Additionally, the Group believes that the revised concept paper, in its current form, has only two direct links to the Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 8 and Goal 12. However, the Group strongly believes that Goal 1, 2, 3, and 7 are also important Goals that can be well addressed by the Fourth UNEA because innovative solutions make possible the inclusion of them, if not all, SDGs due to its crosscutting nature. In this regard, the African Group calls on the Secretariat to refer to Ethiopia's intervention on Agenda 7 during the 142nd meeting of the CPR for more information.

On Focus Areas

The African Group takes note of the three focus areas in the revised concept note. The Group believes that the focus areas do not include Africa's priority areas stipulated in Section 4 of the aforementioned document submitted by the Group. Accordingly, the Group calls for the inclusion of energy insecurity, food insecurity, sand storm, environmental degradation and displacement/migration into the focus areas for the upcoming UN Environment Assembly.

On Implementation

The African Group welcomes the intent by the Secretariat to follow a participatory approach in developing plan for implementing the decisions and resolutions of the Assembly. Be this as it may, the Group would like to reiterate the centrality of synergistic implementation to leave no one behind in the fight against pollution and in addressing environmental challenges. In this regard, the African Group calls on the Secretariat to refer to Section 6 of the position paper submitted by the Group on May 17th, 2018.

Finally, the African Group stands ready to consult with other Member States and Groups so that the concept note can best represent the interest and aspirations of all Member States.