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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Seventh special session

Meeting of the expert group

Nairobi, 17 and 18 September 2018

Annotations to the provisional agenda

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with articles 9 and 10 of its constitution, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) may hold special sessions between its ordinary sessions. At its meeting held in Rabat, Morocco, on 17 and 18 April 2018, the Bureau of AMCEN agreed that there was a need to hold a special session of the Conference.
2. Pursuant to that recommendation, it was decided that the seventh special session of the Conference would be held at the seat of the secretariat to the Conference in Nairobi from 17 to 19 September 2018. The theme of the special session is “Turning environmental policies into action through innovative solutions”. The special session will consist of an expert group segment, to be held from 17 to 18 September, and a ministerial segment, to be held on 19 September.
3. The Bureau considered and adopted a provisional agenda for the expert segment of the seventh special session, which is set out in document AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1.
4. The secretariat has distributed an information note on the seventh special session (AMCEN/SS.VII/INF/1). A complete list of the documents prepared for the session is set out in annex I to the present document.
5. The special session will be jointly organized with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development agency and will be held back-to-back with the first meeting of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform, which will take place at the same venue on 20 and 21 September 2018. The aim of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform is to promote sustainable environmental management in Africa through enhanced partnership, coordination and harmonization of activities.

II. Objectives and overview of the seventh special session

6. The special session will provide an opportunity for the region to prepare for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, which will be held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, from 17 to 29 November 2018. The Conference of the Parties will address a wide range of matters, including reviewing progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. Egypt is also planning to organize the African Biodiversity Summit, a high-level event endorsed by the sixteenth regular session of AMCEN, back-to-back with the Conference of the Parties. The special session will help the region to agree on how best to engage and speak with a common voice at the Conference of the Parties.
7. The special session will also focus on the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will be held in Katowice, Poland, from 3 to 14 December 2018. The year 2018 is important for international climate diplomacy, as nations move towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Governments are also expected to reach a number of other key environmental milestones in 2018, ranging from finalizing the guidelines for bringing the Paris Agreement into full operation to taking stock of the progress that countries are making collectively towards the realization of the aims and ambitions of the Paris Agreement. The special session will therefore provide a forum for the African region to agree on its key messages and strategies in advance

of the negotiations at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. Finally, the special session will consider key issues for discussion at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, which will be held in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019, and Africa's common approach for engagement and key messaging for the Assembly. The theme of the fourth Environment Assembly is "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production".

9. The expert group will bring the above issues to the attention of ministers for their consideration. Ministers are expected to adopt a declaration, decisions and key messages reflecting their discussions under the various agenda items.

III. Items of the provisional agenda

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

10. The representative of the President of the Conference, the Minister for Water and Forests of Gabon, in charge of Environment and Sustainable Development, will chair the expert group segment, while the representative of the Vice-President of the Conference (South Africa) will serve as Rapporteur. In the absence of either of those Bureau members, a Bureau meeting will be convened on the eve of the opening of the seventh special session to take stock of the management of the Conference and decide which of the Bureau members present will be assigned responsibilities during the session, in accordance with the constitution of the Conference.

11. The Bureau of the Conference currently comprises the following members:

- (a) President: Gabon;
- (b) Vice-Presidents: Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Morocco;
- (c) Vice-President and Rapporteur: South Africa.

12. The representative of the President of the Conference will deliver an opening statement. Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme, as secretariat of the Conference, and the African Union Commission will also make opening statements, followed by a representative of the Government of Kenya, who will deliver welcoming remarks.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

13. The expert group will have before it the provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1) to consider for adoption.

(b) Organization of work

14. The expert group will have before it the programme of work for the segment, as contained in annex II to the present document, to consider for adoption.

15. The expert group may wish to establish such working groups as it may deem necessary. The Chair will request the secretariat to provide information on the working groups and invite the experts to consider joining one of the groups. The experts will be invited to make their choices known to the secretariat by lunchtime on the first day of the meeting.

Item 3

Overview of the meeting's objectives

16. A representative of the secretariat will present an introduction and overview of the objectives of the meeting and information on the working groups established.

Item 4**Briefing on the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference and the outcomes of the Global Landscapes Forum regional conference “Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities”****(a) Sustainable Blue Economy Conference**

17. Canada and Kenya will co-host the first global high-level Conference on the Sustainable Blue Economy in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018. The goal of the Conference is to develop concrete commitments and practical actions that can help the world transition to the blue economy. A representative of the Government of Kenya will provide a short briefing on the Conference.

(b) Global Landscapes Forum regional conference “Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities”

18. A representative of the secretariat will provide a short briefing on this regional conference, held in Nairobi on 30 and 31 August 2018, which focused on the coordination and promotion of national, international and private sector support for forest and landscape restoration, paving the way for its implementation.

Item 5**Preparations for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the African Biodiversity Summit**

19. In its decision 16/2, AMCEN welcomed decision XIII/33 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to hold the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to 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 in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, from 17 to 29 November 2018. It also endorsed and supported Egypt’s proposal to host a high-level event on African biodiversity in conjunction with the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide policy and strategic guidance on African biodiversity priorities for inclusion in future programmes of work of the Convention and its protocols.

20. Accordingly, Egypt will convene and host the African Biodiversity Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 November 2018 in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Environment Programme. The theme for the Summit is “Land and ecosystem degradation and restoration: priorities for increased investments in biodiversity and resilience in Africa”.

21. In preparation for the ministerial segment, the expert group will identify Africa’s priorities for increased investment in biodiversity and discuss Africa’s views and perspectives on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will be submitted for consideration during the preparation of the framework. Ministers will also discuss issues relevant to the African Biodiversity Summit and possible outcomes therefrom, including proposals on ways in which land degradation can be combated and ecosystem restoration enhanced in Africa, taking into account the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services’ publications “Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration” and “Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa”, as well as potential country commitments and action on ecosystem restoration.

22. The expert group is also expected to prepare elements of a draft ministerial declaration and a draft pan-African action agenda on ecosystem restoration for increased resilience in Africa. The experts will have before them document AMCEN/SS.VII/3 to facilitate their discussions.

Item 6**Preparations for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

23. Africa’s commitment to tackling climate action is resounding. With a ratification rate of over 80 per cent, the region stands out as a leader in ratifying the Paris Agreement. However, the scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is progressively worsening. The year 2016 was the hottest in history, while 2017 took the escalation even further when the world breached another climate-change milestone as CO₂ levels hit 410 parts per million for the first time in recorded history, thus bringing

the world dangerously close to hitting the 450 parts per million threshold, beyond which progression to 2°C global warming will be irreversible. The secretariat will give a brief presentation based on the background document “Analysis for implementing Africa’s climate obligations catalytically: science, policy and action” (AMCEN/SS.VII/4).

24. The Chair of the African Group of Negotiators will then give an overview, analysis and progress report on the climate change negotiations within the context of bringing the Paris Agreement into full operation and a number of other outstanding issues in preparation for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Poland in December.

25. The importance of adaptation has regularly been emphasized as a priority for Africa. To that end, the Africa Adaptation Initiative was launched during the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris from 30 November–11 December 2015, to galvanize support for the development and implementation of concrete action on adaptation. The Coordinator of the Africa Adaptation Initiative will provide a short briefing on the implementation of the Initiative.

Item 7

Africa’s engagement in the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

26. The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the world’s highest-level decision-making body on the environment, will be held in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019 under the overarching theme of “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. The “innovative solutions” of the theme, covering policies, financing, technologies, partnerships and multi-stakeholder processes, are key, both to solving environmental challenges and to accelerating sustainable development.

27. The seventh special session will provide an opportunity for Africa to agree on a common approach for effective engagement in the work of the Environment Assembly. Africa’s strategic and active engagement in the work of the Environment Assembly will ensure that the priorities of the region are addressed and prioritized in terms of follow-up and implementation.

28. A brief presentation will be made by a representative of the Africa Diplomatic Corps technical team on progress made in relation to the preparations for the Environment Assembly, including proposed resolutions and key priority areas for Africa. A representative from the Governance Affairs office of the United Nations Environment Programme will make a presentation on the roadmap to the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, while a representative of the secretariat will make a presentation on the theme of the fourth session. Information related to this agenda item is set out in document AMCEN/SS.VII/5.

Item 8

Breakout sessions

29. The expert segment is expected to establish three working groups. The experts will be invited to join any of those groups and make their choices known to the secretariat by close of business on Monday, 17 September 2018.

30. The first working group will deliberate on Africa's priorities for increased investment in biodiversity and discuss Africa's views and perspectives on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will be submitted for consideration during the preparation of the framework. Members of the group will discuss issues related to and possible outcomes of the African Biodiversity Summit, including draft proposals on the ways in which land degradation can be combated and ecosystem restoration enhanced in Africa. The working group is also expected to work on the key messages, relevant decisions and elements of the proposed AMCEN Nairobi declaration.

31. The second working group will be mainly composed of the African group of negotiators and will work on updating the African common negotiating position on climate change. The group will deliberate on the status of the negotiations and on outstanding issues in preparation for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The group will review the implementation of the Africa Adaptation Initiative and preparations for the round-table meeting for partners planned to be held in the margins of the General Assembly in New York on 24 September 2018. The working group is also expected to work on relevant decisions, key messages for the special session and elements of the proposed AMCEN Nairobi declaration.

32. The third working group will deliberate on preparations for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, proposed resolutions and key priority areas for Africa, in the context of the overarching theme of the Environment Assembly, “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. The working group is expected to develop a common approach for the effective engagement of Africa in the work of the Environment Assembly. The working group is also expected to work on relevant decisions, key messages for the special session and elements of the proposed AMCEN Nairobi declaration.

33. The working groups will report to the plenary on their outcomes.

Item 9

Preparation of the draft declaration and draft decisions for consideration by ministers at the ministerial meeting

34. A representative of the secretariat will present an overview of the draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages and will request that they be considered for amendment and endorsement under the guidance of the Chair of the expert group segment.

Item 10

Adoption of the report of the meeting of the expert group

35. A representative of the secretariat will present an overview of the report of the expert group segment and will request that the report be considered for amendment and adoption under the guidance of the Chair of the expert group segment.

36. The Chair will invite experts to make comments, paragraph by paragraph. Only comments of substance will be considered and those must be submitted to the secretariat in writing.

37. The Chair will request that the report be adopted in principle on the understanding that comments by experts will be integrated by the secretariat into the final report, which will be produced in English and French.

Item 11

Other matters

38. Major issues of interest not included in the agenda will be discussed. It is proposed that any Government wishing to introduce any other matter should provide the secretariat with a background document for circulation during the session.

Item 12

Closure of the meeting

39. The Chair will invite the Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Africa Office and the Director of the Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission to make their concluding remarks before declaring the meeting closed.

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Document</i>
Working documents	
AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1	Provisional agenda for the expert group segment
AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda for the expert group segment
AMCEN/SS.VII/1	Provisional agenda for the ministerial segment
AMCEN/SS.VII/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda for the ministerial segment
AMCEN/SS.VII/3	Land and ecosystem degradation and restoration: priorities for increased resilience in Africa.
AMCEN/SS.VII/4	Analysis for implementing Africa's climate obligations catalytically: science, policy, action
AMCEN/SS.VII/5	Innovative environmental solutions: moving from policy-level concept to implementation
Reference documents	
AMCEN/SS.VII/REF/1	Report of the first consultative meeting for the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity
AMCEN/SS.VI/6	Report of the ministerial segment of the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCEN/16/3	Investing in innovative environmental solutions to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa
AMCEN/16/8	Report of the ministerial segment of the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Information documents	
AMCEN/SS.VII/INF/1	Information note on the seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Annex II

Programme of work for the expert group segment

Monday, 17 September 2018

<i>Time</i>	<i>Description</i>
9 a.m.–9.30 a.m.	Item 1: Opening of the meeting
9.30 a.m.–9.45 a.m.	Item 2: Organizational matters Item 2 (a): adoption of agenda Item 2 (b): organization of work
9.45 a.m.–10 a.m.	Item 3: Introduction and objectives of the meeting
10 a.m.–10.30 a.m.	Item 4: Briefing on the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference and the outcomes of the Global Landscapes Forum regional conference “Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities
10.30 a.m.–11.15 a.m.	Item 5: Preparations for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the African Biodiversity Summit
11.15 a.m.–noon	Item 6: Preparations for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
noon –1 p.m.	Item 7: Africa’s engagement in the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
1 p.m.–2.30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
2.30 p.m.–6 p.m.	Item 8: Breakout sessions

Tuesday, 18 September 2018

<i>Time</i>	<i>Description</i>
9 a.m.–11 a.m.	Item 8: Breakout sessions (continued)
11 a.m.–12.30 p.m.	Item 8: Outcome of the breakout sessions (plenary)
12.30 p.m.–2 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
2 p.m.–4.30 p.m.	Item 9: Preparation of the draft declaration and draft decisions for consideration by ministers at the ministerial meeting
4.30 p.m.–5 p.m.	Item 10: Adoption of the report of the meeting of the expert group
5 p.m.–5.45 p.m.	Item 11: Other matters