

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Seventh special session

Meeting of the expert group

Nairobi, 17 and 18 September 2018

Report of the expert group meeting

I. Introduction

1. The meeting of the expert group of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held, as part of the seventh special session of AMCEN, at the United Nations Office at Nairobi on 17 and 18 September 2018.
2. The meeting was attended by experts from AMCEN member States, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations agencies, the secretariats of various environmental conventions, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. It was chaired by Mr. Emmanuel Bayani Ngoyi, Director-General, National Anti-Pollution Centre, Ministry of Water and Forestry in charge of environment and sustainable development (Gabon), representing the President of AMCEN, Mr. Jacques Denis Tsanga, Minister for Water and Forestry in charge of environment and sustainable development of Gabon.

II. Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Monday, 17 September 2018 by the Chair.
5. Opening statements were delivered by Mr. Richard Mwendandu, Director for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Kenya, representing Mr. Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry; Mr. Kwame Ababio, Programme Officer, Environmental Governance and Climate Change, representing Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer, Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; Ms. Juliette Biao Koudoukpo, Director, Africa Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and Ms. Olushola Olayide, Senior Policy Officer, African Union Commission, representing Ms. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

III. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda

6. At its first plenary meeting, on the morning of Monday, 17 September, the expert group adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1):
 1. Opening of the meeting.
 2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Organization of work.
 3. Overview of the meeting's objectives.
 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".

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.
6. Preparations for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
7. Africa's engagement in the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.
8. Breakout sessions.
9. Preparation of the draft declaration and draft decisions for consideration by ministers at the ministerial meeting.
10. Adoption of the report of the meeting of the expert group.
11. Other matters.
12. Closure of the meeting.

B. Organization of work

7. At the same meeting, the expert group agreed to adhere to the programme of work set out in the annotations to the provisional agenda contained in document AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1/Add.1.

IV. Overview of the meeting's objectives

8. At the first plenary meeting, the representative of the secretariat outlined the objectives of the meeting and provided information on the working groups established for the breakout sessions (see paras. 30–32 of document AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1/Add.1).

V. Briefing on the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference and the outcomes of the Global Landscapes Forum regional conference “Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities”

9. At the first plenary meeting, Ms. Hellen Gichuhi, representing the Government of Kenya, gave a short presentation on the first high-level global conference on the sustainable blue economy, to be held in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018 and co-hosted by the Government of Canada and the Government of Kenya.
10. At the same meeting, the representative of the secretariat gave a briefing on the outcomes of the regional conference organized by the Global Landscapes Forum on the theme “Landscape restoration in Africa: prospects and opportunities”, held in Nairobi on 30 and 31 August 2018.

VI. 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. At the first plenary meeting, Mr. Hamdullah Zedan (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Government of Egypt, host of the forthcoming fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held on the theme “Investing in biodiversity for people and planet”, presented an overview of that event and of the African Biodiversity Summit, to be held in conjunction therewith – in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNEP – on the theme “Land and ecosystem degradation and restoration: priorities for increased investments in biodiversity and resilience in Africa”.
12. The representative of the secretariat then introduced a note on “Land and ecosystem degradation and restoration: priorities for increased resilience in Africa” (AMCEN/SS.VII/3), prepared by the secretariat with a view to facilitating the expert group's discussions on preparations by AMCEN for the above-mentioned two events. He also drew attention to a draft decision on biological diversity (AMCEN/SS.VII/L.3).
13. The expert group subsequently approved the draft decision for further consideration and possible adoption during the ministerial segment of the special session. (See sect. X of the present report.)

VII. Preparations for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

14. At the first plenary meeting, presentations were made on the preparations for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by the representative of the secretariat, followed by Mr. Mohamed Nasr (Egypt), Chair of the African Group of Negotiators on climate change, and Ms. Kulthoum Omari-Motsumi (Botswana), Coordinator of the African Adaptation Initiative.

15. During the ensuing brief discussion, comments were made by the representatives of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire and responses were given by Ms. Biao Koudenoukpo and Mr. Nasr.

VIII. Africa's engagement in the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

16. At the first plenary meeting, Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Governance Affairs Office, UNEP, gave a presentation on the preparatory process for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

17. At the second plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Monday, 17 September, further presentations were made on the subject by the representative of the secretariat and Mr. Hussein Roshdy (Egypt), representing the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, with additional comments made by Ms. Olayide.

IX. Breakout sessions

18. At the fourth plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 18 September, Mr. Nasr, Mr. Roshdy and Mr. Zedan, the chairs of the three working groups established for the breakout sessions (see paras. 30–32 of document AMCEN/SS.VII/EGM/1/Add.1), reported on the key outcomes of the sessions.

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

19. At the fourth plenary meeting, the representative of the secretariat presented the draft Nairobi declaration and two draft decisions, one on biodiversity and the other on Africa's engagement in the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, together with the key messages on those subjects, as amended and approved in the breakout sessions. Mr. Nasr, chair of the working group on climate change, presented the draft decision and key messages prepared by that group.

20. Comments were made, and/or further amendments proposed, by the representatives of Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa, the African Union Commission and the Major Groups and Stakeholders.

21. The expert group approved the draft Nairobi declaration and draft decisions on biological diversity, on climate change and on Africa's engagement in the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, as orally amended in the light of the comments made in plenary, for further consideration and possible adoption during the ministerial meeting of the special session.

XI. Adoption of the report of the meeting of the expert group

22. At the fourth plenary meeting, the expert group adopted the report of the meeting on the basis of the draft report that had been circulated. The secretariat was entrusted with the finalization of the report in the light of the comments made in plenary.

XII. Other matters

23. At the third plenary meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 18 September, Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UNEP, delivered a statement highlighting the key messages to be underscored by African delegations in the negotiations at forthcoming meetings of the parties to the key multilateral environmental agreements on biodiversity and climate change, among others.

24. At the fourth plenary meeting, the representative of South Africa introduced a position paper on the world heritage and sustainable development in Africa. Comments were made by the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal and South Sudan.
25. The expert group took note of the information provided.

XIII. Closure of the meeting

26. At the fourth plenary meeting, concluding remarks were made by Ms. Biao Koudenoukpo and Ms. Olayide.
27. The expert meeting was declared closed at 7.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 September 2018.

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ADVANCE