

*African Ministerial Conference on the Environment***African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Seventeenth session**

Expert segment

Durban, South Africa, 11–13 November 2019

Agenda item 7 (c): Other issues related to sustainable development in Africa: preparations for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience

Note by the secretariat**A. Background**

1. At its seventh special session, held in Nairobi in September 2018, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment adopted decision SS.VII/1 on biological diversity, in which the Conference urged member States of the Conference “to identify and submit to the African Union Commission the biodiversity issues of priority to Africa over the coming decade, with a view to formulating them into draft resolutions to be presented at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the preparations for the post-2020 biodiversity framework”.
2. The Conference also invited the Government of Egypt, “in collaboration with the African Union Commission and with support from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme, to further develop the Declaration, the draft Pan-African action agenda on ecosystem restoration for increased resilience, and Africa’s biodiversity priorities and make them available for consideration at the African Biodiversity Summit in November 2018”.
3. The present note sets out the outcomes of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in relation to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will be a successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were intended to be achieved by 2020 but will remain largely unattained by then.¹
4. The present note also outlines the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience, which sets out Africa’s implementation of actions to halt further loss of biodiversity by addressing its root causes. The Agenda represents Africa’s commitment to implementing the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.

B. Process of developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

5. Member States of the Conference met in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 12 November 2018, prior to the African Biodiversity Summit, held at the same venue on 13 November 2018, at which Africa’s

¹ See, for example, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *The IPBES Regional Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Africa* (Bonn, Germany, 2018).

position on a number of items on the agenda for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were consolidated in the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration, entitled “Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet”, which was subsequently adopted by ministers at the high-level segment of the meeting. Guidance was also provided in preparation for the African Group of Negotiators to engage with other parties during the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

6. At the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the parties adopted decision 14/34, which set out a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The process included an open-ended intersessional working group and other intersessional informal consultative processes that were to feed into an initial discussion document which would summarize and analyse the initial views of parties and observers and which was to be made available in January 2019.

7. It is expected that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will be held in Kunming, China, from 24 to 28 February 2020, and which will also serve as the tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the fourth 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.

8. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena and Nagoya protocols thereto and stakeholders are encouraged to participate proactively in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework process. Each region has held one consultative workshop on the framework, at which key issues pertinent to the region were discussed. The workshops were guided by a synthesis of submissions by parties and stakeholders which were compiled and made available to the regional workshops by the secretariat of the Convention.² The regional consultative workshop for Africa was held in Addis Ababa from 2 to 5 April 2019.

9. Three meetings of the Open-ended Working Group (co-chaired by Uganda and Canada) were planned. The first was held in Nairobi from 27 to 30 August 2019 and more than 90 experts participated, representing 45 countries across Africa. The second meeting will be held in Kunming, China, from 24 to 28 February 2020, while the third meeting will be held from 27 to 31 July 2020 in Bogotá, Colombia. A number of thematic workshops to discuss various aspects of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are also being planned.

10. Decision 14/34 also invites parties and other Governments to consider developing, as appropriate to the national context, individually or jointly, and on a voluntary basis, biodiversity commitments that contribute to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention, strengthen national biodiversity strategies and action plans, facilitate the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contribute to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

11. The decision also encourages indigenous peoples and local communities and all relevant organizations and stakeholders, including the private sector, to consider developing, prior to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, biodiversity commitments that may contribute to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework and to make such information available as a contribution to the Sharm el-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People.

12. Decision 14/20 sets out a science- and policy-based process for digital sequence information on genetic resources with an extended Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group. The Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is to consider the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and make recommendations on the ways in which to address digital sequence information on genetic resources in the context of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

13. Complementary decisions adopted by the parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols to the Convention invite parties to enhance implementation of the protocols and contribute to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to reflect issues related to biosafety and access and benefit-sharing. In particular, decision 14/34 requested the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions to provide recommendations concerning the potential role of traditional knowledge, customary sustainable use and the contribution of the collective actions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in support of the work of the open-ended intersessional working group.

² CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1.

C. The Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience

14. The Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience was adopted on the recommendation of the Conference on 13 November 2018 in Sharm el-Sheikh by the African Biodiversity Summit.
15. The African Union Agency for Development (formerly NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development) has been entrusted with the coordinating mandate for the Action Agenda, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The African Union Commission has presented the Action Agenda to the Executive Council of the African Union for its consideration and possible endorsement.
16. The Action Agenda covers a period of 12 years (2019–2030) and is consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and its approaches to living in harmony with nature, in which "By 2050, biodiversity is valued and conserved, restored and wisely used, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people". It is also aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 strategic framework of the African Union. The Agenda represents Africa's commitment to implementing the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.
17. As a framework for harmonized and coordinated action, the Action Agenda addresses restoration situations in all ecosystems in which ecosystems are already under ongoing restoration (strengthening or extending existing initiatives); degraded ecosystems have already been identified and considered for restoration (establishing new initiatives); or degraded ecosystems have not yet been considered for restoration (assessing new restoration opportunities).
18. The Action Agenda seeks to provide strategic direction for ecosystem restoration in the region, promote continent-wide awareness-raising and political support for restoration efforts, help to accelerate and extend ecosystem restoration commitments and targets, and foster synergistic and integrated action. It also aims to facilitate effective monitoring of implementation and tracking of progress towards the achievement of ecosystem restoration commitments and targets at both the regional and continental levels. Furthermore, it seeks to facilitate resource mobilization and leverage private sector investment in ecosystem restoration.
19. The Action Agenda will guide and support African countries to meet, in a synergistic and integrated manner, their ecosystem restoration objectives and commitments under various international agreements and processes, including the three Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity and its protocols, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement thereunder – and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the "Ramsar Convention"), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and its associated agreements, the New York Declaration on Forests, the Bonn Challenge and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
20. The Action Agenda builds on and aims to strengthen and extend existing initiatives on land and ecosystem restoration in Africa, such as the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative,³ the Restoration Initiative,⁴ the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative,⁵ the Central African Forest Initiative,⁶ the Sustainable Land Management, Desertification, Biodiversity and Ecosystems-based Adaptation to Climate Change programme (under NEPAD, now the African Union Agency for Development), the Integrated Lake Basin Management Initiative⁷ and the Mangrove Capital Africa programme.⁸

³ <https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall>.

⁴ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/forests/projects/restoration-initiative-tri-scaling-support-forest-landscape-restoration>.

⁵ <https://www.feri-biodiversity.org/>.

⁶ www.cafi.org.

⁷ <https://www.ilec.or.jp/en/lbmi/>.

⁸ <https://www.wetlands.org/casestudy/mangrove-capital-africa/>.

D. Key issues for consideration at the seventeenth session of the Conference

21. Access and benefit-sharing is of particular importance to Africa, which is increasingly expected to bear the cost of ecosystem conservation. Some of its ecosystems are of global importance and benefit, yet the cost of their conservation is not shared. It is therefore vital that access and benefit-sharing be included in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Matters related to access and benefit-sharing extend beyond simple genetic resources and could include benefits accruing from in situ conservation of biological diversity, particularly in view of the costs of conservation, including the opportunity costs, given that the accrued benefits are shared globally.

22. Digital sequence information is also a matter of importance to Africa, particularly in the context of the access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources. Digital sequence information is central to the understanding of how the molecular basis of life has evolved and the ways in which genes can potentially be manipulated to provide new applications, for example for use in disease control, the formulation of new products or the forensic tracking of the geographical origin of products. Pursuant to decision 14/20 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention's extended Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group has held discussions on digital sequence information and is expected to make recommendations on the way in which digital sequence information should be dealt with in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, although it is not yet clear if the recommendations will be available in time to inform the discussions of the parties and assist them in reaching consensus on the matter in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

23. The Conference may wish to recommend policy guidance to the African Group of Negotiators for the Group to prepare common positions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including on matters relating to access and benefit-sharing, and digital sequence information, which are of particular importance to Africa; and to assist the Group in seeking support from like-minded countries to advance the African position.

24. The Conference may also wish to recommend financial and technical support to the African Group of Negotiators in order to prepare background notes, and to facilitate meetings and provide interpretation services during such meetings, and during preparatory meetings when global negotiations are ongoing, such as during the second and third meetings of the Open-ended Working Group, the twenty-third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity.

25. The recent assessments by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services show that the world is continuing to lose many species at an unprecedented rate. While biodiversity forms the very essence of life on earth, the plundering of the foundation of life and the high rate of biodiversity loss are not being given adequate political attention globally.

26. At the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, parties invited the United Nations General Assembly to convene a high-level biodiversity summit at the level of Heads of State and Government in 2020 to raise the political visibility of biodiversity and its contribution to both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development of a robust post-2020 global biodiversity framework, prior to the expected adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at its fifteenth meeting in Kunming, China, in 2020. The General Assembly subsequently adopted resolution 73/234 in that regard.⁹

27. In the run-up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Governments are expected to consider developing, as appropriate to the national context, individually or jointly, and on a voluntary basis, biodiversity commitments which, among other things, contribute to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework". Those commitments could also be prepared for presentation at the biodiversity summit in 2020.

28. The Conference may wish to call upon member States to prepare their commitments in readiness for the biodiversity summit to be held pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/234 in 2020, and to call for public awareness of (a) the importance of biodiversity, (b) the need for action by citizens and (c) the fundamental need for stakeholder engagement at the individual, community,

⁹ In its resolution 73/234, adopted on 20 December 2018, the General Assembly decided "to convene a summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government, within existing resources, before the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention [on Biological Diversity], in 2020, in order to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity". Taking place on the margins of the opening of the General Assembly, the summit will seek to provide political direction and momentum to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

organizational and institutional levels in every country, so that commitments can be made and realized to build a mass movement of actions that together will address biodiversity loss in Africa.

29. The Conference may also wish to emphasize the need for swift implementation of the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience by African countries with the support of the African Union Agency for Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biodiversity and other development partners. The Conference may call upon development partners to provide financial support in the implementation of the Action Agenda, emphasizing that it constitutes Africa's commitment to implementing the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.

30. The Conference may also recommend the holding of regular sessions of the African Biodiversity Summit every four years, bringing together not only ministers for the environment, but also, for example, ministers for agriculture, land, finance and planning.
