



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Seventeenth session
Expert segment
Durban, South Africa, 11–13 November 2019

Report of the expert group segment

I. Opening of the session

1. The expert group segment of the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held at the Olive Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa, from 11 to 13 November 2019.
2. The meeting was attended by experts from AMCEN member States, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations entities, the secretariats of various environmental conventions, partners and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. It was chaired by Mr. Stanislas Stephen Mouba, Gabon National Climate Council, representing the President of AMCEN, Mr. Lee White, Minister for Forests, Sea and Environment, Gabon, and overseer of that country's climate plan.

II. Organizational matters

4. The meeting was opened at 10.05 a.m. on Monday, 11 November by the Chair.
5. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Nosipho Ngcaba, Director-General, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa; Mr. Stanislas Stephen Mouba, representative of the President of AMCEN; Ms. Anja Berretta, Head of the Regional Programme on Energy Security and Climate Change in sub-Saharan Africa, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; Mr. Kwame Ababio, African Union Development Agency; Mr. Frank Turyatunga, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and Ms. Olushola Olayide, Senior Policy Officer, African Union Commission, representing Ms. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission.

A. Election of officers

6. At its first plenary meeting, on the morning of 11 November, the expert group agreed, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution of AMCEN and its rules of procedure, that the expert segment would be conducted under the auspices of the Bureau of the sixteenth session. Accordingly, the representative of Gabon served as Chair, while the representative of South Africa served as Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

7. At its first plenary meeting, the expert group adopted its agenda and programme of work on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/17/EGM/1) and programme of work (AMCEN/17/EGM/1/Add.1, annex II). The expert group also agreed to establish working groups as deemed necessary to assist in carrying out its work.

III. Consideration of the report of the secretariat

8. At the first plenary meeting of the expert segment, the representative of the secretariat presented the report of the secretariat on the work of AMCEN during the period from July 2017 to October 2019 (AMCEN/17/EGM/3).
9. The expert group took note of the report of the secretariat.

IV. Taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa

10. At its first plenary meeting, the expert group considered agenda item 4, which comprised four sub-items: promoting a circular economy in Africa; promoting a biodiversity economy and natural capital accounting in Africa; advancing the blue/ocean economy in Africa; and enhancing the implementation of the decisions of AMCEN.

11. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the context in which the related sub-items would be discussed. Further information was provided in a note by the secretariat on action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa: embracing policy delivery and implementation through AMCEN (AMCEN/17/3).

12. Presentations were made by representatives of the secretariat on the blue/ocean economy (AMCEN/17/6) and on the biodiversity economy and natural capital accounting (AMCEN/17/5). A document was also available on enhancing the circular economy (AMCEN/17/4).

13. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of Botswana, Egypt, Liberia, Morocco and Senegal. Responses were provided by the representatives of the secretariat and the representative of the African Union Commission.

V. Climate change

14. At its first plenary meeting, the expert group considered agenda item 5, on climate change. Mr. Mohamed Nasr (Egypt), Chair of the African Group of Negotiators on climate change, provided an overview of the status of negotiations and preparations for the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Madrid from 2 to 13 December 2019. Ms. Mariam Allam (Egypt) gave a presentation on the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Action Summit, held in New York on 23 September 2019. Ms. Alice Akinyi Kaudia (Kenya), Co-Chair, Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, gave a presentation on the Africa Integrated Assessment on Air Pollution and Climate Change (AMCEN/17/REF/4). Mr. Richard Munang, Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator, UNEP, gave a presentation on policy implications and financing opportunities for the implementation of nationally determined contributions in Africa (AMCEN/17/7).

15. Statements were made on the matter by Mr. Nasr and Mr. Munang.

VI. United Nations Environment Assembly

16. At its second plenary meeting, on the afternoon of 11 November, the expert group considered agenda item 6, including three sub-items. Mr. Zerubabel Getachew (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the technical group of the African Diplomatic Corps, presented a report on the agenda item. Mr. Jorge Laguna Celis, Director, Governance Affairs Office, UNEP, then gave a presentation on the preparatory process for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (AMCEN/17/REF/1).

17. Ms. Janice Cox, World Animal Net, made a statement on the proposed theme of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

VII. Other issues related to sustainable development in Africa

18. At its second plenary meeting, on the afternoon of 11 November, the expert group considered agenda item 7, including six sub-items.

(a) Outcomes of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and their implications for Africa

19. Presentations were made by a representative of the Africa group, Mr. Khalid Cherki, Morocco, and Mr. Boubacar Cissé, Coordinator, Regional Coordination Unit for Africa, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

20. Following the presentations, statements were made on the matter by the representatives of Liberia and Morocco.

- (b) **Outcomes of the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and their implications for Africa**
21. Mr. Shonisani Munzhedzi, Deputy Director-General, Biodiversity and Conservation, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, made a brief presentation on the matter.
22. Statements were made on the matter by Liberia and Zimbabwe. Statements were also made by Mr. Almani Dampha, Senior Policy Officer, Forestry and Land Management, African Union Commission, and Mr. Taye Teferi, Policy and Partnership Coordinator, Africa, for Traffic, the wildlife trade monitoring network.
- (c) **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**
23. Presentations were made by Mr. Francis Ogwal, Natural Resources Manager (Biodiversity and Rangelands), National Environment Management Authority, Uganda, and Ms. Wadzi Mandivenyi, Director, Biodiversity Monitoring South Africa, and interim Chair of the core group of the African Group of Negotiators on biodiversity. Mr. Ababio gave a brief report on the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience.
- (d) **African Environment Partnership Platform**
24. Mr. Ababio gave a brief report on the matter.
- (e) **Implementation of the Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Maputo Convention)**
25. Ms. Olayide gave a presentation on the matter.
- (f) **Preparations for the third meeting of the 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**
26. Mr. Abdourahman Bary, Programme Officer, Regional Office for Africa, UNEP, gave a brief presentation on the status of the preparations for the third meeting of the 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.
27. Following the presentation, a statement was made by the representative of Senegal.

VIII. Trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

28. The representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the status of the AMCEN trust fund.
29. Statements were made in response by the representatives of Angola, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Zimbabwe and the African Union.

IX. Breakout sessions

30. At the second plenary meeting, on the afternoon of 11 November, the representative of the secretariat gave a brief introduction to the breakout sessions to be held during the second day of the session. The expert group subsequently established three working groups to consider a range of matters during those sessions.

X. Consideration of the draft declaration, decisions and key messages

31. At the third plenary meeting, on the afternoon of 13 November, the representative of the secretariat presented the draft Durban declaration and the draft decisions of the three breakout groups: group 1 on taking action for sustainability, the blue economy and the circular economy; group 2 on climate change; and group 3 on biodiversity, the United Nations Environment Assembly and other sustainable development issues. The chairs of the three groups then reported on the key outcomes of those sessions.

32. Ms. Prudence Galega (Cameroon) presented the outcomes of group 1. The outcomes were presented in three parts: part I, on environmental sustainability; part II, on the blue economy; and part III, on the circular economy. Comments were made or further amendments proposed by the representatives of Ethiopia, South Africa, the Sudan and Uganda.

33. Mr. Nasr (African Group of Negotiators) presented the outcomes of group 2, including the draft decision on climate change prepared by the group. Comments were made or further amendments proposed by the representatives of Egypt, Liberia, Mauritius and the African Union Commission.

34. Mr. Shonisani Munzhedzi (South Africa), chair of the group, presented the outcomes of group 3, including the draft omnibus decision prepared by the group. Comments were made or further amendments proposed by the representatives of Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and the African Union Commission.

35. The expert group then considered the draft Durban declaration on taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa. Comments were made and further amendments proposed by the representatives of Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, the African Group of Negotiators and the African Union Commission.

36. The expert group approved the draft Durban declaration, the draft omnibus decision on taking action for the sustainability of environmental and natural resources in Africa and the draft decision on climate change, as orally amended in the light of comments made in plenary, for further consideration and possible adoption during the ministerial segment of the meeting.

XI. Adoption of the report of the expert segment

37. At the third 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.

XII. Other matters

38. There were no other matters for discussion.

XIII. Closure of the expert segment

39. At the conclusion of its third plenary meeting, the expert segment was declared closed at 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 13 November 2019.
