

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Seventeenth session

Ministerial group

Durban, South Africa, 14 and 15 November 2019

Decision 17/2 on climate change

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Durban, South Africa, in November 2019, at the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Expressing appreciation to the Republic of Gabon, in its role as the outgoing President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, for its outstanding achievement in providing political direction and maintaining the unity of Africa in the pursuit of its common interest in climate change negotiations,

Welcoming the Republic of South Africa as the incoming President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and pledging our support to the President in continuing to maintain the unity of Africa in climate change negotiations,

Expressing appreciation to the African Group of Negotiators on climate change for representing the interests of Africa in climate change negotiations and continuing to represent the interests of Africa and speaking with one voice to advance the interests of African countries in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/232 on the Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, which acknowledged the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted thereunder, as the primary international, intergovernmental forums for negotiating the global response to climate change,

Welcoming the outcome of the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, held in Katowice, Poland, from 2 to 14 December 2018, which concluded most of the tasks of the work programme under the Paris Agreement and paved the way for the implementation of the Agreement,

Acknowledging the importance of the recent findings of the international scientific community regarding climate change, including the three recent special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, *Special Report on Climate Change and Land* and *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, and noting that the findings of the reports once again emphasized the special circumstances of Africa, particularly with regard to the vulnerability of Africa to climate change and urgent development challenges, and the concomitant need to scale up global climate action and associated support, and to provide support to vulnerable developing countries for adaptation and loss and damage,

Emphasizing that the African continent as a whole is facing unprecedented pressure owing to various extreme weather events and slow-onset events related to climate change, highlighting the recent flash floods; heavy rainfall, which has displaced thousands of people and caused deaths in North Africa; landslides, which have caused thousands of deaths in Central Africa; severe drought, affecting livestock, water, crops, wildlife and the energy sector in East Africa; extreme events in the Western Africa region, which have caused flash floods, resulting in the loss of lives, displacing thousands and destroying infrastructure; and cyclones, which have caused the deaths of thousands and destroyed homes and properties in southern Africa. The African countries affected by those extreme and slow-onset events are countries with less capacity and existing development challenges, further

highlighting the fact that the adverse impact of climate change is leading to loss of biodiversity and an increase in desertification across the whole African continent,

Welcoming the initiatives of the United Nations Secretary-General on climate change and in convening the United Nations Climate Action Summit, held in New York on 23 September 2019, to enhance ambition and accelerate action, and calling upon the Secretary-General and partners to follow up on the implementation of those initiatives,

Reiterating that the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol thereto and the Paris Agreement thereunder constitute the global legal framework on climate change and that all actions or measures related to climate change must be in full conformity with the principles and provisions of those agreements and, in particular, the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of national circumstances,

Highlighting the fact that while we are celebrating 25 years of multilateral action under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community is still not adequately prepared to address the challenge posed by climate change and its impact,

Reaffirming the commitment of African countries to the Paris Agreement and their commitment to its implementation in line with the principles and provisions of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring balance between adaptation and mitigation, and adequate support for African countries to enhance their efforts against climate change,

Emphasizing the intrinsic relationship that climate change action, response and impact have with equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty, while highlighting the fact that developed countries should provide financial resources to assist developing countries with respect to both mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries, in particular African countries. Such provisions and mobilization of climate finance from developed countries should represent a progression beyond previous efforts,

Regretting the notification of withdrawal of the United States of America from the Paris Agreement as a lost opportunity for the leadership in the collective global fight against climate change, including the participation of the United States of America, towards achieving the global goals under the Paris Agreement,

Appreciating and commending developed and developing countries that have long stood with Africa in the crucial fight against climate change,

Highlighting the importance of the forthcoming twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held in Spain from 2 to 13 December 2019,

Reaffirming the support of African countries to the incoming Presidency of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Government of Chile, in their efforts to advance the negotiations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change in a balanced, fair and inclusive manner,

Appreciating the offer of the Government of Spain to host the forthcoming twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Decide:

A. Climate change

1. *To urge* Parties to the Paris Agreement to recognize the special circumstances and needs of African countries, in line with previous decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to call upon the incoming presidency of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to continue its consideration, with a view to reaching a decision at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change under the second Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement;

2. *Also to urge* developed country Parties to continue fulfilling their commitments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol thereto, and to call upon Parties that have not yet done so to ratify the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and bring it into force;

3. *To stress* the importance of balance in both the organization and outcomes of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, including ensuring that the agenda reflects the key thematic areas of the Paris Agreement in a balanced manner, noting with concern in that regard that adaptation is not adequately provided for in the provisional agenda; and the further work to be undertaken under the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement to provide operational guidance on all provisions necessary for the implementation of the Paris Agreement;

4. *Also to stress* that the Paris Agreement aims to enhance the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change by enhancing ambition, in both action and support, with clear linkage and balance between the actions envisaged to be taken by African countries and the level of support provided;

5. *Further to stress* the need for further elaboration of adaptation planning and implementation under the Paris Agreement to address extreme weather events and slow-onset events, and to call upon Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to continue the elaboration of article 7 of the Paris Agreement, including on the global goal of adaptation, adaptation needs and associated costs, and the recognition the contributions made by African Countries from their own budgets, and encourage African countries to report their adaptation needs, gaps, planning, efforts and action;

6. *To call* for the full implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, including the provisions of article 8 and the support to enable African countries to deal with loss and damage associated with climate change impact, and to reiterate the importance of the guidance by the Conference of the Parties on loss and damage to address such impact;

7. *To urge* all developed country Parties to the Convention, in particular Annex II Parties, to provide climate finance through the operating entities of the financial mechanism and the Adaptation Fund, in line with the Convention and article 9 of the Paris Agreement thereto, and to initiate the discussion at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change on the new collective goal on finance from a floor of US\$100 billion per annum, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries, stressing that the level of ambition in the new collective goal will have a direct impact on the level of ambition in actions taken by African countries;

8. *To emphasize* the need for new, additional, adequate and predictable financial resources from both public and private entities to the climate-related funds, in particular the Adaptation fund, the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, for developing countries to reflect the level of ambition and climate action by African countries;

9. *To recognize* the nominal pledges of the first replenishment of the Green Climate Fund of US\$9.658 billion for the coming four years, and express appreciation to the countries that have contributed substantially to the Green Climate Fund; and to stress the importance of actions to be taken by the Board and trustee of the Green Climate Fund, together with contributing countries, to fulfil pledges and mitigate the potential loss of the total available resources as a result of negative foreign exchange rate fluctuations, among others;

10. *To stress* the need for ambition and enhanced climate action to be reflected in all the provisions of the Paris Agreement, in particular in the financial resources to address climate emergency; while the replenishment of the Green Climate Fund was expected to double its initial resource mobilization of US\$10.3 billion to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development, the amount currently pledged is US\$9.658 billion;

11. *To register* concern with respect to the increasing focus on loans as a source of funding, including through the Green Climate Fund, and in relation to access to climate finance from different sources, in addition to the increase in co-financing ratios, some of which propose co-financing ratios of 1:7 and can increase to 1:12;

12. *To stress* the importance of grant-based resources for African countries, particularly for adaptation, and to emphasize that climate action should not lead to an increase in debt for African countries, particularly given that Africa is the continent least responsible for the current state of the climate;

13. *To call* for the implementation of the technology framework under article 10 of the Paris Agreement to address barriers to access and transfer of appropriate adaptation and mitigation technologies, and to include the effective identification, access to and application of high-impact,

cost-effective adaptation and mitigation technologies for supporting enhanced actions to ensure that African countries are enabled to achieve their full scope nationally determined contributions and low-carbon, climate-resilient development, as stipulated in the Paris Agreement, and to stress the importance of access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies on a preferential and concessional basis to African countries;

14. *To stress* the need for the full implementation of article 11 of the Paris Agreement to address the need for capacity-building to assist developing countries in delivering on their obligations;

15. *Also to stress* that the full implementation of article 13 of the Paris Agreement and its associated modalities, procedures and guidelines, agreed at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (including the conclusion of the current technical work), should give effect to the agreed balance between the transparency of action and support; should fully respect the detailed provision of flexibility in reporting to developing countries, as agreed at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change; and for developing countries will be dependent on continued and enhanced support for reporting and capacity-building for transparency, and on a successful outcome of the negotiation of the terms of reference of the Consultative Group of Experts, expected to be concluded at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change;

16. *Further to stress* the importance of the provision of adequate support to allow African countries to establish or enhance their reporting mechanisms to report on climate action under the Paris Agreement;

17. *To urge* the full consideration of the market mechanisms of the Paris Agreement in terms of raising ambition in mitigation and adaptation actions and helping to meet the cost of adaptation for developing countries, and to emphasize the importance of ensuring that all market mechanisms under article 6 provide a share of the proceeds for the Adaptation Fund; to further emphasize the need for the agreed rules for the market- and non-market-based approaches to ensure environmental integrity, avoid duplication and double-counting, and support fair regional distribution and inclusiveness;

18. *To further urge* all parties to conclude preparation of the remaining guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including finalizing robust rules for articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Agreement, with a view to forwarding a draft decision for consideration and adoption by the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement;

19. *To recognize* the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the importance of issues related to agriculture and climate change. Highlighting the importance of building an African common position on agriculture to advance the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture post-2020 and reaching appropriate modalities in that regard, taking into consideration the particular vulnerability of the agricultural sector in Africa and its relationship with food security and poverty eradication, and the need to increase the adaptive capacity of that sector;

20. *To stress* that the measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral measures, should not constitute discrimination or a restriction on exports from African countries, taking into consideration African trade initiatives and the African continental free trade zone, as a means to enhance trade between African countries;

21. *Also to stress* the importance of the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Congo Basin Climate Commission, the Climate Commission for the Sahel Region and the Island States Climate Commission as African-led and African-owned visions on the facilitation of climate actions; and to call upon the African Union Commission and development partners to provide support for the implementation of those initiatives, further welcoming the Pan-African Programme, which aims to support African countries in the implementation of their full scope nationally determined contributions;

22. To highlight the importance of ensuring strengthened empowerment and participation of youth, as appropriate, in the design and implementation of climate action;

B. Accelerating contributions in Africa

23. *To highlight* the diversity of the full scope of nationally determined contributions of African countries and the fact that a substantial portion of those contributions are conditional on the availability of support, in particular in the areas of finance and technology transfer;

24. *To stress* the importance of enhanced, predictable, sustainable and facilitated access by African countries to climate finance, in particular for adaptation, as a primary catalyst to allow for the implementation of the full scope of nationally determined contributions through complementary national actions in that regard;

25. *To note* the importance of enhancing coordination between different national entities at all levels, including entities responsible for planning, in line with different specific national circumstances and policy regulations, to enhance the preparation, implementation and reporting of the full scope of nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement;

26. *To emphasize* the importance of facilitating access by African countries to finance from different financial institutions and from different sources, in particular public finance, as a means of closing the financing gap, noting that the current estimate of the finance gap for implementing the full scope of African nationally determined contributions is US\$3 trillion, and further noting that African countries have already contributed some 20 per cent of the annual cost of adaptation from their own budgets. Such contributions have an impact on the availability of resources for other sectors nationally, such as education and health, as well as on overall poverty reduction;

27. *To recall* African Union Assembly decision 723 (XXXII), and the decision of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, at its session on 9 February 2019, which encourages African and international stakeholders working in cities and local government to support the work of United Cities and Local Governments Africa, which aims to enhance national ownership of climate actions by different stakeholders in line with national regulations and laws;

C. Short-lived climate pollutants and air pollution

28. *To emphasize* the benefits of improving air quality, including through managing, and as nationally appropriate, reducing short-lived climate pollutants in the environment, agriculture, health and forest conservation, while responding to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals, noting the need for an assessment of the linkage between policies to address air pollution and policies to address climate change;

D. Appreciation

29. *To welcome with appreciation* the work done by African members of the constituted bodies of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the Green Climate Fund Board members representing Africa, and their efforts to ensure that African priorities and needs are reflected in the work of all constituted bodies of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol thereto and the Paris Agreement thereunder;

30. *To congratulate and express appreciation* to Egypt, Ethiopia and Kenya for their co-leadership, and Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Namibia and Senegal for their support, of the various action areas of the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit and encourage them to continue their leadership role in following up on the implementation action areas;

31. *To express appreciation* for the support provided to African countries and for the coordination of the African Group of Negotiators on climate change by the African Development Bank, African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, Economic Commission for Africa, the Government of Germany, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and World Bank, among other development partners, and reaffirms Africa's commitment to addressing climate change and moving towards low-carbon and climate-resilient communities.