

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

Ministerial segment

Durban, South Africa, 14 and 15 November 2019

Report of the ministerial segment**I. Opening of the ministerial segment**

1. The ministerial segment of the seventeenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held at the Olive Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa, on 14 and 15 November 2019.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of member States of AMCEN, other States, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations entities and the secretariats of various environmental conventions, partners and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. The opening of the ministerial segment was chaired by the President of AMCEN, Mr. Lee White, Minister for Forests, Sea and the Environment, Gabon, and overseer of that country's climate plan.

II. Organizational matters

4. The meeting was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Thursday, 14 November by the Chair. Ms. Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, Head, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) South Africa office, was the master of ceremonies.
5. Opening statements were delivered by Mr. Mxolisi Kaunda, mayor of Durban; Mr. White; Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP; Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Head of the Environment, Climate Change, Water and Land Management Division, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, representing Ms. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission; and Ms. Barbara Creecy, Minister for the Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa, the keynote speaker, who officially opened the ministerial segment.
6. Further statements were delivered by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer, Global Environment Facility; Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, speaking on behalf of Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer, African Union Development Agency; Mr. Anthony Nyong, Director, Climate Change and Green Growth, African Development Bank; Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, on behalf of Mr. Ola Elvestuen, President, United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and Minister for Climate and the Environment, Norway; Ms. Terhi Marjukka Lehtonen, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Climate, Finland; Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Director for Global Sustainable Development, Directorate-General of the Environment, European Union; Mr. Beyene Russom, Ambassador of Eritrea to Kenya, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to UNEP and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps; and Mr. Fazal Issa, speaking on behalf of civil society organizations.

A. Election of officers

7. At the first plenary meeting of the ministerial segment, on the morning of 14 November 2019, the following countries were elected to serve on the Bureau for the period 2019–2021:

<i>Subregion</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Position</i>
Southern Africa	South Africa	President
Central Africa	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Vice President
Eastern Africa	[TBC]	Vice-President
North Africa	Algeria	Vice President
West Africa	Senegal	Vice President and Rapporteur

8. At the same meeting, the outgoing President, Mr. White, invited the incoming President, Ms. Creecy, to take her place on the podium and make her inaugural speech, at which point the presidency of the Conference was officially handed over from Gabon to South Africa.

B. Adoption of the agenda and the programme of work

9. The representatives adopted the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/17/1).

10. The representatives agreed to follow the programme of work set out in annex II to the annotated provisional agenda (AMCEN/17/1/Add.1).

III. Launch of the *Global Environment Outlook for Youth: Africa*

11. The *Global Environment Outlook for Youth, Africa: A Wealth of Green Opportunities* was introduced by Mr. Victor Mugo, Country Coordinator, Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network, Kenya, and by Ms. Aminetou Bilal, a member of the African Union Youth Advisory Council.

12. Comments were made by the representative of Egypt.

IV. Consideration of the report of the expert segment

13. At the first plenary meeting of the ministerial segment, on the morning of 14 November, the chair of the expert segment, Mr. Stanislas Stephen Moubia, Gabon National Climate Council, representing the President of AMCEN, reported on the work and outcomes of the expert segment.

14. The representatives took note of the report.

V. Ministerial policy dialogues in the context of the theme of the seventeenth session, “Taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa”

15. At the second meeting of the ministerial segment, on the afternoon of 14 November, ministerial dialogues took place in the context of the theme of the seventeenth session, “Taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa”. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Creecy. Four dialogues took place, each chaired by a moderator. For each dialogue, a panel of keynote speakers made statements on the topic of the dialogue, followed by contributions from other speakers.

A. Promoting a circular economy in Africa

16. The dialogue was moderated by Mr. Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar, Minister, Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nigeria. The panel of speakers comprised Ms. Yasmine Fouad, Minister for the Environment, Egypt; Mr. Julius Monzi Muia, Principal Secretary, National Treasury, Kenya; Mr. Batio Bassière, Minister for the Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change, Burkina Faso; and Mr. Michael Kafabusa Werikhe, Minister of State for Industry, Uganda.

17. Each panellist responded to questions on the topic of the dialogue. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Ethiopia, Rwanda, the European Union, the African Union Commission, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Namibia, Cameroon, the Global Environment Facility and Eritrea. The panellists and the moderator delivered closing remarks.

B. Policy implications and financing opportunities for the implementation of nationally determined contributions in Africa: the role of African ministers and policymakers

18. The dialogue was moderated by Mr. Mohamed Elmi, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Forestry of Kenya. There were two keynote speakers: Mr. Nyong and Mr. Pablo Vieira, Global Director, NDC Partnership Support Unit. The panel of speakers comprised Mr. Sam Cheptoris, Cabinet Minister for Water and the Environment of Uganda; Mr. Muia; and Mr. Abubakar.

19. Mr. Nyong and Mr. Vieira presented background information on the topic of the dialogue, while each panellist delivered a statement on the topic. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Mozambique, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Morocco, the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, and Cameroon. The moderator delivered closing remarks.

C. Promoting biodiversity economy and natural capital accounting in Africa

20. The dialogue was moderated by Ms. Fouad. The panel of speakers comprised Mr. Shonisani Munzhedzi, Deputy Director-General, Biodiversity and Conservation, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, speaking on behalf of Ms. Creecy; Ms. Fatma Zohra Reghis, Minister for the Environment and Renewable Energy, Algeria; Mr. White; Mr. Abubakar; and Mr. Claude Nyamugabo Bazibuhe, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

21. The representative of the African Group of Negotiators on biodiversity, Ms. Wadzi Mandivenyi, from the Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, gave a presentation introducing the topic. Each panellist responded to questions on the topic of the dialogue. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Eswatini, the European Union, Zimbabwe, the open-ended intersessional working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and Eritrea. The moderator delivered closing remarks.

D. Advancing the blue/ocean economy in Africa

22. The final ministerial dialogue, on advancing the blue/ocean economy in Africa, took place during the third meeting of the ministerial segment, on the morning of 15 November. The dialogue was moderated by Ms. Prudence Galega, Secretary-General, Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, Cameroon. The panel of speakers comprised Ms. Kaba Nasséré, Cabinet Director, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mr. White.

23. Each panellist delivered a statement on the topic. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Angola, Rwanda, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Liberia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Chad, the European Union, the African Union Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and UNEP. The moderator presented closing remarks.

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

24. At the third meeting of the ministerial segment, on the morning of 15 November, a representative of the secretariat presented a report on the status of the general trust fund of AMCEN (AMCEN/17/8).

25. The Conference took note of the report.

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

26. At the third meeting of the ministerial segment, the ministers considered the draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages submitted by the expert group.
27. The ministers adopted the Durban Declaration on Taking Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa, as orally amended. The declaration is set out in annex I to the present report.
28. The ministers also adopted the following decisions, as orally amended: decision 17/1, on taking action for the sustainability of environmental and natural resources in Africa; and decision 17/2, on climate change. The decisions are set out in annex II to the present report.

VIII. Venue and date of the eighteenth session

29. At the third meeting of the ministerial segment, it was agreed that the eighteenth session of AMCEN would be hosted by a member State from West Africa, on a date to be decided by the Bureau, in conjunction with the secretariat and in consultation with the host country. Senegal had been nominated as Vice-President and Rapporteur of the Bureau for the period 2019–2021 and would therefore host the eighteenth session, subject to the approval of that country.

IX. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment

30. At the third plenary meeting of the ministerial segment, the representative of the secretariat introduced the draft report of the ministerial segment. The ministers agreed to entrust the finalization of the report to the secretariat and adopted the report on that basis.

X. Other matters

31. A representative of UNEP gave a brief presentation on a study on wood fuel and biomass.
32. Ms. Lisinge-Fotabong gave a presentation on the geospatial portal for the Africa Environment Partnership Platform. Comments were made by the representative of Egypt.

XI. Closure of the session

33. The President declared the seventeenth session of AMCEN closed at 1.20 p.m. on Friday, 15 November 2019.

Annex I

Durban Declaration on Taking Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Durban, South Africa, on 14 and 15 November 2019 at the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Committed to continuing to take environment and climate actions to unlock inclusive wealth creation that safeguards the socioeconomic well-being of the African people,

Guided by the outcomes of previous sessions of the Conference in its 34 years of existence,

Guided also by the decisions of the Assembly of the African Union that have provided leadership to the Conference on Africa's positions on environment and development matters,

Acknowledging the global outcomes of the various sustainable development agendas in contributing to Africa's development,

Noting with appreciation the progress made in implementing the decisions of the Conference,

Aware that there are gaps in the uptake and limited implementation of the decisions of the Conference by member States and stakeholders,

Determined to strengthen our steps and actions to implement, monitor and deliver the results of our decisions to achieve the 2030 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union,

Hereby declare our resolve:

1. To express our full commitment to making the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment the principal forum for establishing regional environmental policies with effective mechanisms for implementation;
2. To commit ourselves to continuing to address the environmental challenges of, and take advantage of the opportunities available in and for, the African region;
3. To reiterate our determination to take concrete actions to implement past and future decisions of the Conference, and, in that regard, agree to and affirm our commitment to the key policy messages that guide our resolve, as set out in the annex to the present declaration;
4. To reiterate our commitment to integrating climate actions into our socioeconomic and environmental policies, plans and programmes to secure our development pathways.

We also:

5. Express our profound appreciation to the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme and other development partners and institutions, among others, for their continued support for the work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
6. Mandate the President of the Conference to convey the priorities and positions contained in the present declaration and in the decisions, key messages and report of the seventeenth session of the Conference to all parties, including partners and organizations, with a view to enlisting their support and collaboration, and to report thereon to the Conference at its eighteenth session;
7. Mandate the President of the Conference to submit the report of the seventeenth session of the Conference, including the present Durban Declaration on Taking Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa and the appendix thereto, to the African Union Commission for further action by the policy organs of the African Union;
8. Thank Gabon for its presidency of the Conference during the period 2017–2019 and welcome the presidency of South Africa for the period 2019–2021;
9. Pay tribute to the President of South Africa, Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, and the Government and the people of South Africa for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants, for the excellent facilities made available, and for the generosity extended to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its seventeenth session.

Appendix

Key policy messages

I. On taking action for environmental sustainability

We commit ourselves to taking measures to evaluate our progress in the implementation of our decisions and address emerging issues.

We reaffirm our commitment to using all policy tools at the national and regional levels to achieve strong, harmonized, coherent delivery of environmental and natural-resources-related programmes to enable the achievement of a sustainable development path and eradicate poverty.

We welcome the establishment of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform geospatial portal as a mechanism to support decision-making on, monitor implementation of and track progress in Africa's sustainable use of its environmental resources.

We call upon the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other partners to support the African Women Innovators for Sustainable Environment and the Network of African Women Environmentalists and similar women's and youth networks for sustainable environment management.

II. On the circular economy

We recognize the value of the circular economy and its potential to improve the way in which we produce and consume goods and services, reduce waste, create jobs and contribute to sustainable development.

We agree to raise the political visibility and awareness of the circular economy in Africa through the development of policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional arrangements.

We commit ourselves to replicating, scaling up and using circular economy approaches as part of our region's transformation efforts as contained in Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

We encourage the private sector and other non-State actors to promote and invest in the circular economy to create employment and sustainable trade in and markets for green products and services.

We commit ourselves to the implementation of a circular economy approach in Africa to assist with reducing the dependence on natural resources and reducing pollution in Africa.

We resolve to implement a circular economy in order to contribute to economic growth and job creation and to divert waste, in particular plastic waste, away from landfills through capacity development programmes and initiatives.

III. On the blue economy

We commit ourselves to raising awareness of the blue economy.

We recognize that oceans and freshwater sources play a critical role in the economic development of the continent and its small island developing States, and the need to promote a more sustainable balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

We stress the need to enhance the environmental contribution to the development of the blue economy of Africa, as well as to mitigate the impact of natural disasters such as floods and cyclones.

We commit ourselves to celebrating the African Day of the Seas and Oceans on 25 July every year.

IV. On biodiversity

We will raise the visibility and importance of the contribution of our biological resources and their services to sustainable development through promoting the opportunities offered by the biodiversity economy.

We commit ourselves to addressing the threats facing our biological resources in order to mitigate the impact of the challenges that the continent and its small island developing States are facing.

We commit ourselves to providing political direction and momentum to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

We reaffirm our pledge to swiftly implement the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience as part of Africa's commitment to implementing the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030).

We are committed to continuing to cooperate with each other and speaking with one voice on regional and global agendas with regard to matters of biological resources.

We will recognize and mainstream the importance of biodiversity resources in Africa's agricultural productivity and ensure that agricultural practices do not have a negative impact on ecosystem health and biodiversity.

V. On land degradation, desertification and drought

We reaffirm our commitment to providing adequate resources to address the drivers of migration related to desertification, land degradation and drought.

We reaffirm our commitment to the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and recognize the value of land degradation neutrality and its potential to improve development and prosperity and to create decent jobs, including green jobs and other employment-generating opportunities, for vulnerable communities in degraded areas.

VI. On the United Nations Environment Assembly

We commit ourselves to taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity for the continent in order to find common solutions to environmental challenges, recognizing the link between the themes of the previous sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, including the theme for the fourth session of the Assembly, and nature-based solutions.

We express our appreciation to the Africa Group in Nairobi for its work in negotiations during the intersessional period and during the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly, work that is based on the political guidance provided by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and acknowledge the centrality of the Conference in formulating African positions on all matters related to the environment.

VII. On climate change

We emphasize the recent findings of the international scientific community regarding climate change, including the three recent special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: on global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, on climate change and land, and on the oceans and cryosphere in a changing climate, which reflect the specific circumstances of Africa and the linkage between Africa's vulnerability to climate change and urgent development challenges.

We reaffirm the commitment of African countries to the full implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted thereunder in line with the principles and provisions of the Convention, ensuring balance between adaptation and mitigation, and ensuring the availability of adequate support for African countries to enhance their efforts to combat climate change.

We emphasize the intrinsic relationship that climate-change-related actions, responses and impact have with equitable access to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, stressing the importance of enhanced, predictable, sustainable and facilitated access by African countries to support, in particular climate financing and technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms, especially for adaptation and loss and damage, to allow for the implementation of the full scope of nationally determined contributions.

We highlight the importance of the forthcoming twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, under the presidency of Chile, and appreciate the offer of the Government of Spain to host the session, confirming Africa's commitment to securing successful outcomes.

VIII. On plastic pollution

We commit ourselves to supporting global action to address plastic pollution, which will require further work in order to engage more effectively on global governance matters relating to plastic pollution, including reinforcing existing agreements and the option of a new global agreement on plastic pollution that takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the full life cycle of plastics, from production and design to waste prevention and management, while ensuring coherence among and coordination of activities undertaken by existing regional and international instruments and taking into consideration national circumstances while highlighting the importance of technology transfer, research on alternatives to plastic and adequate financing to enable African countries to deal with plastic pollution.

Annex II

Decisions adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its seventeenth session

A. Decision 17/1: Taking action for the sustainability of environmental and natural resources in Africa

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Durban on 14 and 15 November 2019 at the seventeenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the outcomes of previous sessions of the Conference that have inspired individual and collective action by member States, stakeholders and other partners,

Noting that taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity is essential for the African continent in order to find common solutions to environmental challenges,

Taking cognizance of the formulation of an African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy strategy and recalling the definition of a blue economy set out therein,

Determined to advance an action-oriented approach that addresses gaps and opportunities in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference as a contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as Agenda 2063 of the African Union,

Decide:

I

Taking action on decisions

1. To agree to take necessary action to accelerate the implementation of past and future decisions of the Conference;
2. To evaluate progress in the implementation of the decisions and declarations of the Conference prior to its eighteenth session;
3. To agree to expand or create environmental policy harmonization structures, including interministerial committees to monitor progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;
4. To involve non-State actors, such as the private sector, civil society, academia and development partners, in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;
5. To welcome the proposal for a science-policy-business forum to contribute to the provision of information to policymakers for informed decision-making on environmental issues, and request the secretariat to formulate a concept note on such a forum for consideration and possible adoption at the eighteenth or nineteenth sessions of the Conference and provide the Conference with relevant information to facilitate decision-making and consideration at those sessions;
6. To expedite the implementation of AMCEN decision 13/4, in which the Conference called on countries that had not yet paid their contributions to urgently meet their obligations and to provide additional resources to the trust fund;
7. To prioritize, plan and budget for in the annual programmes, plans and budgets of the country ministries or entities responsible for the environment, as appropriate, the contributions made to the Conference and the implementation of its decisions, and invite parties to report in an accountability framework on the implementation of the present decision;
8. To invite the secretariat to undertake bilateral discussions with States to ensure the payment of their outstanding contributions to the trust fund and report on country commitments to fulfil their obligations at the eighteenth session of the Conference;

II

Blue economy

9. To welcome the formulation of the African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy strategy and to contribute towards its implementation in line with the mandate of the Conference, and invite the secretariat of the Conference, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, to prepare a report on the matter, in consultation with member States, taking environmental considerations into account, for consideration by the Conference at its eighteenth session;

III

Circular economy

10. To request the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic communities and other partners to support the contextualization of the circular economy to the needs and resource profiles of African countries and prepare the necessary toolkits for building the capacity of those countries;

11. To ensure that the concept of the circular economy includes a comprehensive approach to address plastic pollution based on the full life cycle of materials, including plastics, from design and production to waste prevention and management, while ensuring coherence and coordination with activities undertaken by existing regional and international instruments;

12. To develop a regional programme to promote and scale up the circular economy and, in that regard, request the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic communities and other partners to support that programme;

13. To promote the circular economy through an integrated approach, which involves stakeholders, the development of policies, and research and development, and encourages and incentivizes private-, public- and community-sector-driven green initiatives;

14. To promote and strengthen existing regional, subregional and national governance structures for the sustainable implementation of the circular economy;

IV

Bamako Convention

15. To request the United Nations Environment Programme to work closely with the Government of the Congo, the African Union Commission and other relevant partners in the organization of 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;

16. To encourage member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Bamako Convention;

V

Biodiversity

17. To endorse the establishment of a core group to facilitate the coordination of the African group of negotiators in developing a common regional position to strengthen Africa's voice, and mandate the African group of negotiators on biodiversity, established by AMCEN decision 14/8, to articulate African perspectives, priorities and common positions during all the negotiations of the open-ended working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, in October 2020;

18. To adopt Africa's biodiversity priorities as endorsed at the African Biodiversity Summit, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 November 2018, and to emphasize the critical need for adequate provision of financial resources, access to technology and capacity enhancement commensurate with the level of ambition of the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

19. To adopt the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience as Africa's commitment to implement the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, and invite all member States to swiftly embark on its implementation, building on existing initiatives and programmes, and invite United Nations entities, the African

Development Bank, development partners and relevant organizations to provide all necessary support to implement the Pan-African Action Agenda;

20. To call for the establishment of a global biodiversity fund to provide a dedicated and sustainable flow of financial resources to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

21. To implement the initiative of the Government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and land and ecosystem degradation;

22. To request the African Union Commission, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, other relevant entities of the United Nations, civil society and local communities to support and promote that initiative;

23. To welcome the offer of the Government of Egypt to convene a meeting for all stakeholders to advance discussions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and support the above-mentioned initiative;

24. To develop a regional cooperation framework on advancing the biodiversity economy that enhances the value of biological goods and services, integrates natural capital accounting and scales up investment in the sustainable utilization of biological resources as part of Africa's transformation;

25. To request the African Union to hold regular African biodiversity summits, at least every four years, to provide policy direction and guidance and raise awareness of socioeconomic issues and of the environmental importance of biodiversity in Africa;

26. To encourage member States to attend, at the level of Heads of State and Government, the summit on biodiversity being convened in 2020 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/234 of 20 December 2018, to provide political direction to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and raise the visibility of biodiversity and its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

VI

Land degradation, desertification and drought

27. To request member States and development partners to support the implementation of land degradation neutrality transformative projects and national drought plans, and to promote appropriate action to combat desertification and drought under the drought initiative of the Convention to Combat Desertification;

28. To encourage member States to use the drought toolbox and to strengthen their preparedness for drought and early warning systems through enhanced regional and national institutional efforts;

29. To invite the African Union Commission to provide all necessary support to representatives of the African region in the intergovernmental working group to explore effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention to Combat Desertification;

30. To request development partners, international financial mechanisms, the private sector and other stakeholders to boost investments and technical support aimed at combating desertification, land degradation and drought, and achieving land degradation neutrality and resilience-building;

VII

Maputo Convention

31. To encourage member States that have not yet done so to ratify the 2003 Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Maputo Convention);

32. To invite member States to offer to host the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention, in 2020;

33. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the African Development Bank and the World Wide Fund for Nature, among others, to support the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention;

VIII

United Nations Environment Assembly

34. To agree that the theme for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme should focus on nature-based solutions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, thereby addressing the priority of utilizing Africa's rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems to empower African countries and, in particular, local communities, to advance their socioeconomic development in a sustainable way and to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation;

35. To request the representatives of the African group of States in Nairobi to include issues of common interest to Africa in the negotiations under the theme of nature-based solutions, focusing in particular on securing the means of implementation for African countries in the form of finance, appropriate technology transfer on a concessional and preferential basis, and capacity-building;

36. To encourage the African group of States to further engage and develop a common African approach to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, prior to that session in 2021;

37. To participate in the ad hoc open-ended expert group established under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Assembly to effectively address the issue of plastic pollution in all environments, with the aim of reaching an ambitious outcome at the fifth session of the Assembly, in 2021;

IX

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

38. To request the African Union Commission and partners to establish a platform for African negotiators on matters pertaining to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in order to foster a coherent African position and enable African countries to speak with a common voice in global negotiations;

X

Poverty, environment, gender and youth

39. To enhance measures and strategies for the sustainable utilization and fair and equitable sharing of natural resources to eradicate poverty and enhance job creation and economic activities for women and youth;

40. To improve access to natural resources by women and youth in order to strengthen security of tenure, ownership and access to rights for women and youth;

41. To establish platforms and networks for women and youth that enhance their involvement in the management of natural resources;

XI

Africa Environment Partnership Platform

42. To request member States and regional institutions to work closely with the African Union Development Agency and the African Union Commission and provide the needed technical and financial support for, and participate in, the multi-stakeholder Africa Environment Partnership Platform and provide the requisite data to enrich the geospatial portal;

XII

Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment thereto

43. To urge parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to adopt an action plan preventing the market penetration of obsolete equipment in Africa while facilitating access to secure and energy-efficient technologies on the continent;

44. To also urge African States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol as soon as possible.

B. Decision 17/2 on climate change

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Durban, South Africa, on 14 and 15 November 2019 at the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Expressing appreciation to 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 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 serving as the Meeting 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 – on global warming of 1.5°C, on climate change and land, and 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 western Africa, 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; and noting that 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 adopted 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, and noting that 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 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 its 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:

I

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 session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement;

2. *Also to urge* developed-country parties to continue to fulfil 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 of 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 of the Paris Agreement 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 adopted thereunder, 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 which 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. *Also to 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;

II

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;

III

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 sectors, 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;

IV

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 adopted thereunder;
30. *To congratulate and express appreciation* to Egypt, Ethiopia and Kenya for their co-leadership, and to 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, the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Government of Germany, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, among other development partners, and to reaffirm Africa's commitment to addressing climate change and moving towards low-carbon and climate-resilient communities.