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Summary of the proposed Africa Green Stimulus Programme*

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated economic, societal and environmental challenges globally and especially in Africa. The ripple effects of the largescale worldwide disruption brought about by the pandemic are expected to continue for many years to come. It is envisaged that the COVID-19 pandemic will affect Africa's ability to manage and use the environment and natural resources far into the future. This will in turn put further pressure on the African region's already severely constrained resources as the continent largely depends on natural resources.

2. Worldwide, governments have been redirecting funds away from conservation, environment and natural resources management. The pandemic has exacerbated the multitude of inter-related crises that African and other developing countries are facing, including exacerbating already unsustainable debt levels.

3. At the same time, the recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to reset African states' economies on a pathway towards a more environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and inclusive development. It is therefore essential to ensure that Africa's economic recovery strategies maintain and enhance the availability of natural resource base and protect the environment.

4. The pandemic has also underscored the importance of strengthening the nexus between public health, pollution abatement, climate action, biodiversity and ecosystems, economic prosperity and social equity. In this regard, an African Green Stimulus Programme is being proposed to catalyse the recovery of key sectors in Africa hardest hit by the pandemic.

5. The African Green Stimulus Programme is an innovative African-led initiative that is being developed to support the continent's recovery response to the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in a more green and sustainable manner. The programme intends to provide an overarching framework that will support the recovery of environment and sustainable development initiatives in Africa, whilst identifying new areas requiring strategic interventions.

6. The programme is intended to bring about a common and unifying continental response by enhancing and forging cooperation and partnerships between and among African governments, non-state actors, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector in support of a comprehensive green recovery for Africa.

7. The African Green Stimulus Programme is intended to be dynamic and responsive to support African countries to continue attaining Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as delivering impactful scaled up interventions as the continent recovers from the pandemic. The African Green Stimulus Programme also aims to contribute towards the

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

operationalization of the provisions of UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement regarding finance, technology transfer and capacity building for African countries.

II. Objectives of the Africa’s Green Stimulus Programme

8. The African Green Stimulus Programme seeks to contribute to the goal of enhancing action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa as called for in the Durban declaration of the 17th ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in South Africa in 2019. It will also contribute to implementing the African ministerial declaration on biodiversity adopted at the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity in November 2018 in Sharm El Sheikh, and the Egyptian initiative to promote a Coherent Approach for Addressing Biodiversity Loss, Climate Change, and Land and Ecosystem Degradation endorsed by AMCEN in its Decision 17/1.

9. The key objectives African Green Stimulus Programme are as follows:

(a) to provide rapid response in support of key economic sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, such as ecotourism and the biodiversity economy;

(b) to provide direction and support on medium term interventions of key sectors identified in the African Green Stimulus Programme to enhance their catalytic recovery;

(c) to stimulate focus, build synergies, forge partnerships and enhance cooperation and coordination of existing climate change, biodiversity, desertification, land degradation and green economy programmes in support of the green recovery of Africa;

(d) to enhance political ambition and support in scaling up implementation of existing and new projects and programmes in key areas through financial resource mobilisation, technical and capacity building support in support of the green recovery of Africa;

(e) to support the development of longer-term transformative green economy of Africa.

10. To achieve the above objectives, the programme will have: (a) immediate and urgent interventions of 1-3 years, (b) short to medium term interventions of 3-5 years, and (c) longer term transformative interventions to support growth of key green economy sectors and build resilience to future shocks in Africa.

III. Proposed key elements the Green Stimulus Programme

A. Improving Air Quality, enhancing Chemicals and Waste Management and promoting the Circular Economy

11. Improving air quality as well as waste management, including marine litter and pollution, are priorities for Africa. Managing chemicals and wastes in a circular economy pathway will significantly improve the way in which goods and services are produced and consumed, reduce waste, create jobs, empower women, mobilize the youth and contribute reduction of pollution and incidents of public health. In addition, the containment measures for COVID-19 in Africa are having consequences on the environment, due to waste from used face masks, gloves and of chemicals pollution because of use of sprays and sanitizers.

12. The scaling-up of circular economy practices in Africa will support the transition to a circular economy at the national, regional and continental levels.

B. Enhancing the Conservation of Biodiversity and Combatting the Illegal Wildlife Trade

13. Many of the drivers of biodiversity loss - such as land-use change, intensive agriculture, climate change and ecosystem degradation - may increase the risk of animal-to-humans emerging zoonotic infectious diseases. It is estimated that 60% of infectious diseases are zoonotic, and 72% of these zoonoses originate from wildlife.

14. Addressing the threats facing Africa’s biological resources, including alien invasive species management is critical. There is an urgent need to combat illegal and unregulated wildlife exploitation and trade in view of the origins of COVID-19 pandemic’s to prevent similar future zoonotic transmission of diseases.

C. Revitalising Eco-tourism and the Biodiversity Economy

15. The tourism industry globally has been hit hard by COVID-19 and Africa's ecotourism sector has been especially negatively impacted. Environmentally and socially responsible tourism that promotes conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage, needs to be revitalized. Furthermore, the biodiversity economy has direct linkages to ecotourism and has also been negatively affected by the pandemic. The rejuvenation of ecotourism could contribute significantly to the continent's recovery.

D. Combating Land Degradation, Desertification and Drought

16. Addressing land degradation, desertification and drought are key issues for Africa's sustainable development. It is imperative that measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 do not lead to the unintended consequences of cutting budgets for initiatives aimed at combating desertification.

17. The populations and ecosystems in Africa's dry lands are some of the most vulnerable to human-induced and natural shocks due to a range of socio-economic and environmental factors. Enhanced commitment to providing adequate resources to address the drivers of desertification, land degradation and drought are required.

E. Enhancing Climate Action

18. Climate change seriously threatens Africa's continued economic growth and livelihoods of vulnerable populations. The coronavirus crisis may also threaten local efforts to meet climate commitments as the focus shifts to deal with the pandemic. Scaled up, new and additional and appropriate financial resources and investment in large-scale transformative projects are urgently required to support the implementation of Africa's climate change programmes, particularly with respect to the priority of adaptation.

19. African countries in updating their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement, should highlight the economic sectors with greatest potential for green recovery and job creation, which can rebound and develop sustainably through international investment and financial, technological and capacity building support. Furthermore, there is a need to include the vulnerable sectors due to the negative impacts of climate change and the required adaptation measures, as well as support needed from developed countries as per UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement provisions. African countries need to also invest in Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems and strengthen the provision of accurate and timely climate and weather information.

F. Investing in the Blue Economy

20. A sustainable blue or ocean economy holds great promise for contributing towards the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Investment in the blue or ocean economy has the potential to contribute significantly to Africa's industrialization and economic development. There is an urgent need to invest in the management of African oceans if the momentum of a blue or ocean economy is to be harnessed to contribute to national economies and the conservation of ecosystems.

21. There is need to enhance the environmental contribution to the development of the blue economy of Africa, as well as to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as floods and cyclones is imperative, as well as contributing to the livelihoods of people living in coastal and riparian areas. Harnessing the potential for improving productivity of the ocean environment, job creation, strengthening food and nutritional security, wealth creation opportunities and environmental sustainability towards sustainable blue economy development is also required.

G. Scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Security Systems

22. Agriculture is Africa's main economic driver, with very few countries having diversified into other sectors like manufacturing and services. Agriculture on the other hand, is being negatively impacted by climate change, as increases in temperature will result in reduced yields, prevalence of diseases and extreme weather events such as drought and flooding. The successful implementation of Climate Smart Agriculture is crucial in the drive towards sustainable development.

23. Africa's agricultural programmes for adaptation to climate change and building the resilience of farmers to climate related and economic shocks require additional support, including scaling up climate smart agriculture to enhance food security and agricultural livelihoods are required.

H. Supporting Sustainable Management of Forests

24. African forests are home to an abundance of animal and plant life, although these are some of the world's most threatened ecosystems. Africa's forest area is shrinking at an alarming rate, due to illegal logging and harvesting of forest species.

25. Support for African countries to achieve significant reduction in deforestation rates, while enhancing agricultural productivity, biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of natural resources and income of small-scale food and forest producers is required. Improved cross-sectoral collaboration in the fields of forestry, wildlife, agriculture, livestock, water, energy, tourism, and address issues related to the human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface and sustainable value chain development is needed.

I. Improving Water Conservation and Use

26. Improving water conservation and use as well as governance are important developmental issues for Africa, where many areas are arid, and are experiencing water stress or scarcity. Many countries in Africa are struggling to meet the objectives of water security, reliable supplies of water for productive activities and water safety, owing to extreme events, such as floods and droughts.

27. Regular handwashing is strongly recommended to combat COVID-19, which necessitates access to sufficient, safe, and affordable water in addition to that required for cooking, hydration, and general sanitation. Enhancing the equitable and sustainable use of Africa's water resources for socioeconomic development through investing in improving management of water resources, such as river basin catchments, impoundments and lakes, enhancing water use efficiency as well as rain water harvesting and the modernization of irrigation systems to more water efficient systems is required.

J. Investing in Renewable Energy

28. Africa is fortunate to be richly blessed with renewable energy sources, including hydro, sun, wind and others, and African countries require sound planning to ensure the right energy mix. However, it is reported that nearly 60% of sub-Saharan Africa's (and nearly half of the continent's) population remains without access to electricity, representing the largest share among all world regions. As the world rebuilds from the COVID-19 pandemic, African countries should explore on how they can 'Recover Better' and use this opportunity to prioritize clean energy investments in their recovery plans and stimulus packages - helping reset their economies and close energy access gaps.

29. Enhancing the roll-out of Renewable Energy initiatives is required to provide sufficient support to enable African countries to take bold action to leapfrog to the smart, people-centered renewable energy and energy efficient systems as well as value chains in terms of new and emerging markets and job creation. Investments in renewable energy and a diversified energy mix could as well shield African economies from future pandemics and economic crises.

K. Developing Smart Cities and Promoting Green Urbanisation

30. Promoting green urbanisation requires that water and air pollution prevention, waste management, spatial planning and mobility need to be managed. Green urbanisation is intended to fundamentally transform existing urbanization patterns emanating from the traditional industrialization models, including spatial planning, towards a green urbanization approach, in order to attain sustainable development objectives.

31. As Africa is rapidly urbanizing, there is a need to develop African sustainable urban models. The development of Smart Green Cities should support the incorporation of appropriate technology, ecological services and culture in urban models. This should result in increases in transaction efficiencies, improved transportation and mobility, deepening internet access and e-commerce; decentralization of distributed renewable energy; and the emergence of new services.

L. Enhancing Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)

32. The COVID-19 crisis has not only highlighted the critical role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for continued functioning of societies but has also brought to the fore the startling digital inequalities between and within countries. The COVID-19 virus has presented a stress test for governments worldwide, with the Internet playing a crucial role in keeping critical infrastructure and resources connected and available. For instance, reliable, high-speed Internet is key to ensuring that hospitals and medical institutions have access to global information networks and

resources necessary to fight the virus. Broadband connectivity is also now crucial for educational institutions and businesses to continue to provide essential services

33. Lessons learnt from COVID-19 have revealed gaps in the ICT systems, bandwidth and data access which has implications for Africa's transition to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). This needs to be addressed, with additional investments in ICT infrastructure in Africa to fully and effectively engage with rest of the world in the digital era.

IV. Institutional arrangements, governance and coordination

A. Programme Coordination

34. In terms of coordination, the African Green Stimulus Programme (AGSP) proposes that a Coordinating Committee is established to oversee the implementation of the key areas in the programme.

35. This Committee will provide technical guidance and coordination of the entire Programme. The Committee will also provide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) oversight and will be responsible for producing reports on the implementation of the AGSP to AMCEN and the African Union. This Committee will also provide Secretariat services for the entire programme and will be responsible for preparing reports for AMCEN and the AU.

36. It is envisaged that an *on-line platform* will be established for the AGSP, which will include a user interface as well as comprehensive information on the portfolio of projects and programmes within each Priority Area. The Platform will be designed to ensure that the programme is dynamic and interactive, and that it can be accessed publicly and updated on regular basis. The Platform will also serve as an interface between potential funders and investors and individual programmes and projects under the AGSP.

B. Institutional arrangements and governance

37. The following institutional arrangements for AGSP is proposed:

(a) *African Union Assembly* – to endorse the regular progress reports on the key areas of the AGSP from CAHOSCC and adopt decisions on the programme.

(b) *Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC)* – to provide oversight and high level leadership of the entire AGSP at Heads of State level.

(c) *Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC ARDWE)* – to provide guidance to the AGSP on the key areas of work related to agriculture, water, environment, climate change and the blue economy and endorse these as the relevant body of the African Union.

(d) *Specialized Technical Committee on Infrastructure and Energy (STC I&E)* - to provide guidance to the AGSP on the key areas of work related to renewable energy, infrastructure and tourism and to endorse these as the relevant body of the African Union.

(e) *African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)* – to coordinate the work of the AGSP and prepare documents on key issues from the AGSP Coordinating Committee for presentation to the African Ministers of Environment

V. Financing, resource mobilization, capacity building, research and technology, communication and partnerships

A. Financing the African Green Stimulus Programme

38. It is acknowledged that within the African Region, as in most other developing regions, green recovery investment needs are significant as direct government funding is limited, and variable amongst Member States. Financing mechanisms for the AGSP should build upon existing systems. Africa needs to take direct and urgent responsibility in mobilizing finance to implement green recovery programmes in the relevant sectors of the economy.

39. For the African Green Stimulus Programme to deliver impactful results at scale, new, additional, adequate and predictable financial resources from both public and private entities.

Innovative financial modalities that include financial streams from African countries and from partners are required, including enabling contributions from development partners, as well as partnerships with the private sector.

40. The Programme will be able to deliver impactful results at scale, only when new, additional, adequate and predictable financial resources from both public and private entities are mobilised, through for example, the proposal for an Africa Debt for Climate Initiative that will promote the implementation of mitigation strategies including reducing short lived climate pollutants, protecting and expanding forest conservation, and any other nature-based solutions.

B. Capacity Building

41. For Africa to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities for a green recovery, there is an urgent need to build and strengthen capacities in all the proposed areas at various levels. This calls for actions that will promote and strengthen the capacity of the African Intergovernmental Organisations as well as Member States to implement green recovery programmes.

C. Research and technology

42. Relevant research and the development and transfer of appropriate technology forms an integral part of the African Green Stimulus Programme. There is need for the deployment, diffusion and transfer of the relevant technologies, including African-developed technologies based on principles of accessibility, affordability, appropriateness and adaptability, as well as to address barriers to technology transfer.

43. Furthermore, for Africa to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities for green recovery, there is an urgent need to build and strengthen capacities in all the proposed key areas at various levels. Relevant research and evidence will be necessary to support the African Green Stimulus Programme.

D. Partnerships

44. One of the overall goals of the Programme is to forge partnerships amongst all stakeholders to enable collaboration on the key priority issues. Therefore, forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones between member states, intergovernmental organisations, private sector and NGOs as well as financing institutions will be key to the implementation of the AGSP. In this regard, Public-Private Partnerships are an important component for ensuring the implementation of the AGSP key areas.

45. Furthermore, the Africa Green Stimulus Programme should not be seen in isolation, and is intended to take cognizance of existing programmes and contribute to these in order to bring these initiatives to scale. Synergies and complementarities between existing and new emerging initiatives are intended to be enhanced through the AGSP.

E. Communication, advocacy and awareness raising

46. A well-crafted communication and advocacy plan is essential to the successful implementation of the African Green Stimulus Programme. It will also facilitate information sharing, enhanced collaboration, attract further support and allow for feedback on the effectiveness of the Programme. The Programme must consider the role of other relevant institutions and stakeholders in its roll-out, which needs to be communicated effectively.

VI. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

A. Monitoring and evaluation

47. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is required to track the performance and impact of implementation of the AGSP. The monitoring and evaluation framework should include participatory identification of challenges, constraints, success factors as a basis for lessons learned and decisions on courses of action or change. In order to achieve this, a standardized monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for programmes needs to be established.

48. The entire African Green Stimulus Programme should be reviewed on a regular basis based on the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation processes in order to refine programmes and targets.

B. Reporting

49. In terms of reporting on the implementation of the AGSP, it is proposed that the African Union Commission together with the African Union Development Agency and the AMCEN Secretariat will compile annual reports based on the outcomes of the Monitoring and Evaluation process, with inputs from the AU Member States. These will be tabled at AMCEN meetings, AU STC meetings, CAHOSCC and the AU Assembly as part of the high-level oversight of the AGSP.

VII. Enabling conditions, assumptions and risks

A. Enabling conditions

50. The availability of sufficient resources for the implementation of the AGSP as well as buy-in and political will from African leaders is critical to the success of this programme and there is a need to ensure that the green recovery agenda is high on Governments' priority list.

51. The availability of appropriate data and information to support the implementation of this Programme is key. High quality, reliable and high-resolution data on key issues such as targeted priority areas will be required to enable the African Green Stimulus Programme to deliver impactful results.

52. There is need for regional integration and adequate participation of all stakeholders at all levels. The inclusion of a gender and youth component is important to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in Africa. In addition, the involvement of Civil Society in this recovery programme is key to stimulate awareness among African Governments on the need to rebuild Africa's economy in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

B. Assumptions and risks

53. In order for the transformation towards a low-carbon development trajectory to happen in Africa, significantly scaled up financial and technical resource mobilization as well as investment in the Green Economy is required. Enhancing current and future engagement and coordination of the green recovery programmes are key and could be achieved through collaboration amongst African Governments, African Regional Economic Commissions and with international partners.

54. Meaningful consultation with Member States and partners is important, and there should be a focus on the involvement of the youth in the recovery programmes to capitalize on their digital skills. Adopting a long-term vision with respect to this AGSP is also important to stimulate momentum towards the implementation of green economy and climate actions to restoring Africa's economy after this pandemic and enhancing resilience to future economic crises.

55. The major risks regarding this AGSP include insufficient buy-in from the African Union, Member States, and other partners to adopt this as an important element to the overall and sustainable recovery programme of the African Continent as well as potential resourcing constraints if insufficient financial and technical resources are not allocated to this programme.

VIII. Conclusion

56. It is acknowledged that many of the identified priority areas are interlinked and not necessarily new initiatives, and this African Green Stimulus Programme intends to elicit a more coherent and significantly enhanced continental response to these issues in order to achieve impactful at scale interventions towards a more sustainable, inclusive and low-carbon development pathway over the next decade. Thus, the African Green Stimulus Programme seeks to enhance ambition and upscale implementation of existing environment and sustainable development projects and programmes in Africa through consolidated resource mobilisation, technical support and capacity building as well as improved coordination and cooperation under the umbrella of this programme.

57. The development of this African Green Stimulus Programme should be fast-tracked in order to contribute meaningfully towards the broader African Post-Covid-19 Response Programme. This programme should not be seen as a new initiative but rather a mechanism aimed at taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa as called for in the Durban Declaration of the 17th ordinary session of AMCEN.

