

Sponsored by the Africa Group
Draft Resolution on Green Approaches for a Sustainable post COVID-19 Recovery
Date: 16-12-2021

COVID-19 pandemic has caused havoc on every part of the world. Efforts to contain the pandemic and its socio-economic impacts have exacerbated existing inequalities, tested global partnerships, and seriously undermined trust in multilateral cooperation. Vulnerabilities such as food insecurity, conflict and debt have been rising, and the hard-won development gains are being lost.

As the pandemic unfolds, the situation remains fluid and rapidly evolving, with measures needed to ensure that the trajectory of the socio-economic recovery remains in line with the global multilateral commitments, including the SDGs. Socio-economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19 will not be sustainable unless they are green and just.

Green recovery in the short, medium and long term needs to embed the following key priority areas:

- a. Green finance, including increasing flows, efficiency, and impact of funding,
- b. Supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and national just transition,
- c. Nature-based solutions with focus on biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, forestry, oceans, and ecotourism,
- d. Resilient agriculture, inclusive economic development and green jobs, and
- e. Green and resilient cities, including water flooding and water resources.

The Resolution is intended to bring about a common and unifying response and enhance cooperation and partnerships between states and non-state actors, intergovernmental organizations, partners and the private sector, among others, in support of a comprehensive green recovery. The Resolution provides a framework to support implementation of environment and sustainable development recovery initiatives, whilst identifying new areas requiring strategic interventions.

The Resolution is sponsored by the African Group who wishes to highlight the importance of prioritizing the institution of green and sustainable recovery measures from the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver mutual benefits and co-benefits for social, economic, and environmental resilience in a holistic and inclusive manner whilst developing enabling policies, investments and reforms that can contribute to socio-economic recovery through green approaches, including awareness, capacity-building, financing, innovations, technologies and cooperative arrangements, among others.

Contact person of the Africa group: **XXX**

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The United Nations Environment Assembly,

- PP 1. *Noting with concern* that covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals and other global sustainable development commitments,
- PP 2. *Acknowledging* that COVID-19 pandemic represents an economic shock with global concern that has adversely affected all economies, particularly those of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, due to, among others, existing vulnerabilities and as a result, food insecurity, conflict, increasing debt and loss of the hard-won development gains remains elusive,
- PP 3. *Reiterating* that the COVID-19 pandemic does not change the urgency of addressing the environmental and climate crisis challenges, but has instead accelerated the need for the world to take urgent action to address these challenges so as to prevent substantial impacts on the long-term recovery from COVID-19,
- PP 4. *Emphasizing* the need that as countries move to socio-economic recovery from the impacts COVID-19 pandemic, choices are to be made that will shape trajectories on the use of environmental goods and services as well as climate resilience for decades to come,
- PP 5. Recalling the Addis Ababa Action Agenda
- PP 6. *Appreciating* the various efforts at national, regional and global levels on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as, the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan, the African Green Stimulus Programme, European Green Deal, The Green Fiscal Policy Network, the Global Recovery Observatory and the Partnership of Action on Green Economy as platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences of green recovery and where nurtured partnerships are geared to tackle the multiple challenges of recovery as well as enhancing sustainable development,

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- PP 7. *Noting* that the response to COVID-19 pandemic requires countries and stakeholders to be more proactive and take urgent measures and interventions that are commensurate to the rate of its uncertain and unfolding nature in a timely and impactful manner;
- OP 1. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen current measures to promote sustainable management of natural capital, conserve biodiversity, protect ecosystem services and their functions, combat climate change and pollution as part of the contribution to implementing recovery measures.
- OP 2. *Call upon* countries and the international community to prioritize institutionalization of green and sustainable recovery measures, to enable communities to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, that can deliver mutual benefits and co-benefits for social, economic and environmental resilience in a holistic and inclusive manner through green approaches, including finance, innovation, technology, awareness, capacity-building and cooperative arrangements and the adequate, predictable and accessible provisions of support to developing countries, in particular African countries, to assist national efforts for implementation of such measures, such as:
- a) renewable energy initiatives and national just transition which promotes a long-term economically viable recovery, increase job opportunities, energy access and productivity, while contributing to mitigation efforts,
 - b) Ecosystems based approaches that supports biodiversity, sustainable land management, forestry conservation, oceans management and ecotourism while contributing to improved livelihoods,
 - c) Climate resilient and sustainable agriculture focused on creation of green jobs to eradicate poverty, reduce food insecurity and generate increased economic growth in agricultural sector and rural communities, and
 - d) Green and resilient cities with a focus on information, communication and technology to support sustainable urban planning models, resilient infrastructure development, and disaster risk reduction strategies to ensure adaptation to climate change while also providing positive effects on biodiversity, climate, wellness and air quality.
- OP 3. *Encourages* member states to strengthen measures to undertake COVID-19 recovery measures in national and sectoral development plans so as to create a clean, resilient, and inclusive society.
- OP 4. *Requests* United Nations entities and partners to support and engage countries in research and development, innovative technology, finance mobilisation, capacity-building and knowledge sharing for an inclusive green recovery.

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- OP 5. *Urges* Member States to share knowledge and build capacity, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the areas of research and development, technology transformation and transfer to ensure equal access to data, knowledge, technical support for an inclusive green recovery.
- OP 6. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to support countries, through the revamped United Nations development coordination system, on information, knowledge, capacity development and technical support, for a better and resilient green recovery.
- OP 7. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to provide technical assistance to countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition that catalyses efforts for resource mobilization, for strengthening and scaling up country's efforts on green recovery measures.
- OP 8. *Calls upon* the international community, private sector, multilateral financial institutions, banks and insurance companies to support countries whose economies have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through provision of traditional and innovative finance for a green path to recovery.