

Summary Report January-December 2021

Regional Facilitator, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa

The year 2021 was an active year for both Mrs. Gertrude Kenyangi (Support for Women in Agriculture and Development) and Mr. Ayman Cherkaoui (Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection) who served as Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa throughout the year.

The four key priorities for the Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa in 2021 were:

- 1) Keeping the African Major Groups and Stakeholders active and connected in these challenging times
- 2) Celebrating the World Environment Day
- 3) Preparing for the first part of the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
- 4) Preparing for the first and second parts of the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly

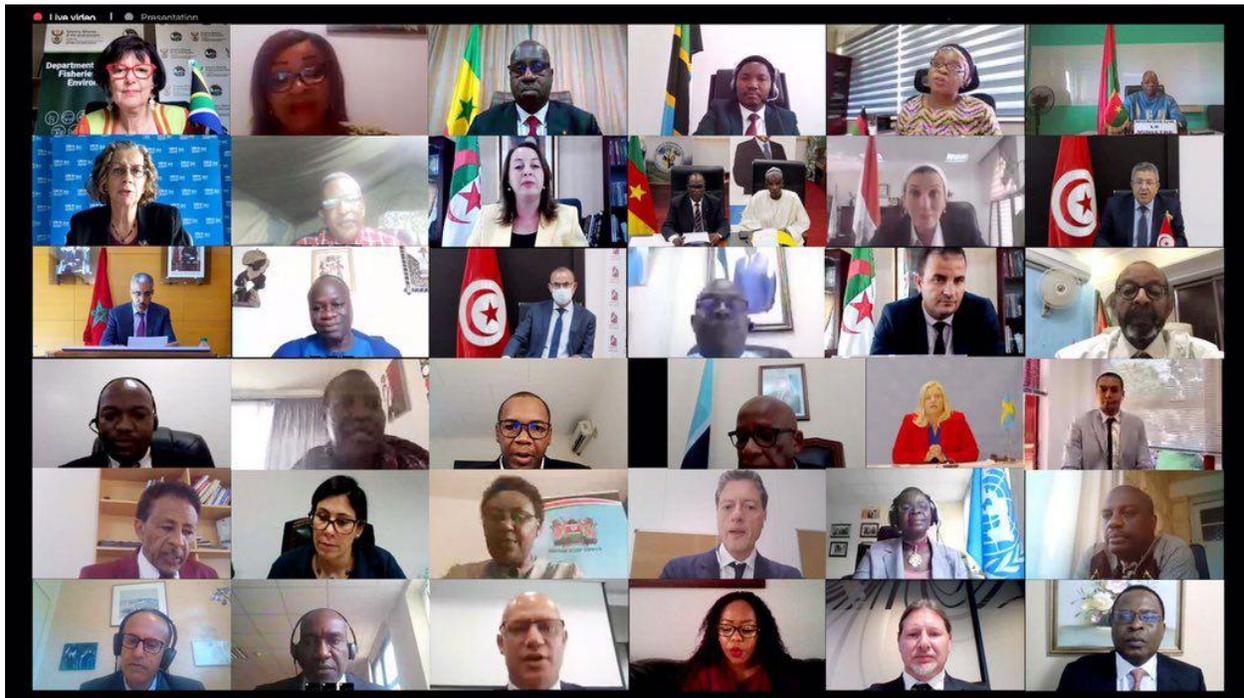
Evidently, COVID-19 had a multidimensional impact on all planned activities.

Both Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the African Major Groups and Stakeholders for their mobilisation and guidance as well as to the UNEP secretariat for their steadfast and ever reliable support and advice. The Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa thank Mr. Griffins OCHIENG (Centre for Environment Justice and Development) for his service as one of the elected NGO MG Members of the MGFC and congratulate Mrs. Djatougbe AZIAKA (Welfare Togo) for her election as one of the elected NGO MGO Members of the MGFC.

Key Activities January-December 2021:

- Communication
 - 12 email campaigns sent to the Members of the African Major Groups and Stakeholders (as of December 27th 2021, 198 contact emails in that mailing list managed directly by the Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa, following an invitation by UNEP CSU to manage it). An additional Google Groups mailing list is also used by the Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa.

- An “MGS Africa” WhatsApp group comprising in 156 participants (increase of 39 % in participants compared to December 2020)
- Directly UNEP related coordination
 - Participation in the First part of the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (September 2021) at the Expert and Ministerial Segments
 - A dozen webinars/online or hybrid events organized or co organized including:
 - Dialogue with the Africa Plastic Coalition (December 2021)
 - 5th Africa Animal Welfare Conference (November 2021): *conference organised by ANAW and UNEP*
 - African Major Groups and Stakeholders 18th Ordinary Session of AMCEN Preparatory Conference (September 2021)
 - 2021 Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (September 2021)
 - African Major Groups and Stakeholders 18th Ordinary Session of AMCEN Preparatory Meeting (August 2021)
 - African Major Groups and Stakeholders Engagement Optimization Meeting (August 2021)
 - African Environmental Law Congress (July 2021): *conference organized by IUCN, UNEP & the Hassan II International Center for Environmental Training*
 - African Major Groups and Stakeholders World Environment Day 2021 Preparatory Meeting (May 2021)
 - Launch of the African Green Universities and Youth Education Network (March 2021): *launch co organized by UNEP & the Hassan II International Center for Environmental Training*
 - Global Major Groups Stakeholders Forum (February 2021)
 - Participation in several Major Groups Facilitating Committee Meetings including the facilitation of the election of the new MGFC Co-Chairs
- 3 Statements coordinated by the Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa and successfully adopted by the African Major Groups and Stakeholders:
 - For AMCEN 18.1 and UNEA 5.2 (both short and long versions) Annex 1
 - For the World Environment Day 2021 Annex 2
 - For COP 26 Annex 3
- The Regional Facilitators, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa, also coordinated/spoke or attended more than two dozen events linked to Rio Conventions organized by stakeholders such as the UNFCCC or the IUCN



Screenshot captured from the Ministerial Segment of the first part of the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (September 2021)



Screenshot captured from the African Major Groups and Stakeholders 18th Ordinary Session of AMCEN Preparatory Conference (September 2021)

ANNEXES

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**AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS CONTRIBUTION
AND KEY MESSAGES TO THE FIRST PART OF THE 18TH ORDINARY
SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN 18.1) AND THE SECOND PART OF THE
FIFTH UN ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA 5.2)**

Full statement (English Version)

We, the Major Groups and Stakeholders from the African region,

Having gathered virtually to discuss how to secure people's well-being and ensuring environmental sustainability in Africa and our contribution to the First part of the 18th Session of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

Have agreed on the following key messages to AMCEN:

We are deeply alarmed by the recent IPCC Sixth Assessment Report that raises further concerns to the African continent as the most adversely impacted by Climate Change with, among other issues, having the highest increased surface temperature, sea level rise, and frequency and intensity of the climate extreme events.

We request AMCEN to take decisive action on underlying pandemic risks, unsustainable consumption and production, transformation of food systems, climate crisis, nature crisis, pollution and waste crisis as part of the commitment to implement the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) through African-contextualized approaches, such as Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for increased Resilience.

We urge AMCEN to enhance their commitment to conserving, protecting and enhancing the resilience of Africa's environment, animals, and natural resources as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

We further urge AMCEN to prioritize the sustainable management of ecosystem services, biodiversity and climate during the recovery phase in Africa and make deliberate moves to impactfully engage with the informal sector, as a backbone of Africa's economy, and where women and youth are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

We further urge the International Community, particularly Developed Countries, as well as African Countries to enhance commitments to providing adequate resources and means of implementation to address the drivers of desertification, land degradation,

floods and drought. We *request* the International Community to support, at an accelerated pace, existing continental and regional programmes such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel, the African Renewable Energy Initiative, the African Adaptation Initiative and the Adaptation of African Agriculture to Climate Change Initiative, the Regional Climate Commissions of the Congo Basin, the Sahel Region and the Small Island States. We *call on* the International Community to initiate new programmes, as appropriate, to stimulate the creation of green and decent jobs for vulnerable communities in degraded areas in Africa.

We *strongly encourage* AMCEN to ensure that natural resources are not politicized and to instead develop transparent mechanisms, planning, programmes and action pegged on the sustainable natural capital beyond the systematic review on what is already documented about Africa. We *also encourage* AMCEN to integrate the findings of empirical research supported by adequate funding by African Governments in the spirit of leaving no one behind, in order to responsibly build and strengthen ‘socio-economic structures’ for the benefit of all its citizens without favor or discrimination, while keeping in mind the specific needs of women, youth and the most vulnerable.

We *express our strong concern* with the lack of participation and involvement of African Major Groups and Stakeholders in the expert meetings that ended earlier this week and *request* that the African Major Groups and Stakeholders be provided with timely documentation as well as timely and predictable opportunities to input in key outputs and outcomes of these meetings.

(a) The African Green stimulus Programme

We *stress* that the economic stimulus packages designed and implemented during and post the COVID-19 pandemic provide a unique opportunity for an innovative ‘green stimulus’ approach that African Countries should not miss in order to address environmental issues that are a major threat to the existence and sustainability of ecosystems and decent livelihoods in Africa.

We *recognize and commend* AMCEN for its role in providing strategic and policy guidance for the creation of the African Green Stimulus Programme as a vehicle to promote sound environmental management for sustainable development in Africa.

We *strongly encourage* African Countries to adopt and support the African Green Stimulus Programme in a high priority manner on their respective national agendas through the establishment and strengthening of inclusive national platforms, empowered and supported with adequate resources, aligned with their national contexts and sectoral priorities, and that is synergized and complemented with relevant programmes across the continent.

We invite African Countries to jointly purpose to develop evidence-based assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the environment in Africa as a priority for the African Green Stimulus Programme to contribute to the overall post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Africa and to be able to attain the targets contained in Agenda 2063: ‘The Africa We Want’ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

We emphasize the need to closely link and integrate the Africa Green Stimulus Programme with existing Blue and Green Economy, Climate Change, Biodiversity and broader Environmental initiatives, as well other novel and innovative interventions to fully support Africa’s Green Recovery, while mobilizing the adequate financial and technical resources to upscale and enhance the implantation of these initiatives.

We strongly invite AMCEN to tap into the invaluable resources of Africa Major Groups and Stakeholders at the national and local level, including indigenous peoples, women and youth as well as faith-based organizations to harness their capacities to contribute towards sustainable development by accelerating the impactful and inclusive mobilization of all African citizens towards sustainable green recovery with no one left behind.

We strongly recommend educating and incentivizing African Major Groups and Stakeholders, including the Private Sector, to promote, invest and engage in the African Green Stimulus Programme, with a view to create decent and green jobs in Africa and sustainable trade in markets for African Green products and services.

We request for the meaningful and diverse inclusion of African Major Groups and Stakeholders in, inter alia, the Coordinating Committee, task forces and work groups of the Africa Green Stimulus Programme.

(b) Africa’s online negotiations position

We recall and support the decision made by AMCEN during its 8th Special Session to limit virtual engagement to information sharing and not on substantive matters during this COVID-19 pandemic. *We encourage* African Countries to participate while maintaining a common approach for engagement in upcoming virtual engagements and highlighting Africa’s challenges in virtual negotiations which result in failure to engaging meaningfully.

We caution that such support should not be used as a factor to limit Major Groups and Stakeholders active participation in preparation and during the UNFCCC COP26, including when it comes to national and regional consultations.

We deplore that the increased dependency, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, of international negotiations and conferences on the use of internet in a digital environment, has not expanded spaces for engagement and created a level playing field and has instead constricted spaces with African and Major Groups and Stakeholders as the most affected due to poor internet connectivity and funding constraints.

We take note of a growing need, in the context of online international negotiations and conferences, to consider the review and, as appropriate, the development of policies, laws, regulations and practices regulating negotiations and diplomacy while taking into meaningful account the special circumstances of Africa.

We draw the attention of AMCEN on a significant need for access to free or heavily subsidized online secure platforms as particularly key to African Countries Negotiators. *We advise* that the need ought to be answered effectively, inclusively and jointly by the UNEP Secretariat working with AMCEN and relevant international organizations and *request* that such access be extended to African Major Groups and Stakeholders.

(c) Resumed session of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly and other United Nations Environment Programme related issues

We urge African Countries to support the United Nations Environment Assembly's commitment to contribute to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner.

We acknowledge the decision to hold the fifth session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly in two parts, an online meeting and an in-person resumed meeting, owing to the extenuating circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced across the world.

We affirm that the virtual UNEA 5.1 held on February 22 to 23, 2021 was successful in the extensive consideration of urgent administrative and procedural matters governing the United Nations Environment Programme.

We acknowledge and welcome the approval of the medium-term strategy for the period 2022 - 2025 and the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022 - 2023 as a decision adopted by UNEA 5.1.

We encourage all African Countries to participate, share African perspectives in the discussions of substantive matters and influence the in-depth negotiations anticipated to take place in UNEA 5.2 under the theme "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".

We support the statement made by the African regional group in the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly in calling for a more coordinated regional delivery of the programme of work including through strengthening UNEP in Nairobi.

We call on AMCEN to promote the effective inclusion and participation of African Countries in the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

(d) Africa's preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

We affirm that upholding and increasing international and national obligations and commitments, particularly by developed countries, as well as urgent climate action by our African countries is a matter of urgency and survival for Africa.

We invite AMCEN to echo the voices of the African leaders who participated in the Leaders' Summit of April 2021 and to position Africa at the heart of the global climate agenda.

We reiterate the need for African Countries to develop, pursue and implement their climate and sustainable development commitments. *We implore* AMCEN to work closely with varied sectoral innovations that can be competitive in a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy by utilizing the existing mechanisms under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other mechanisms to support Africa.

We call upon our African countries to support the African Group of Negotiators during the forthcoming UNFCCC COP 26 / CMP 16 / CMA 3, to agree on a strong common regional position and by speaking with one voice in order to oblige developed countries to fulfil their commitments, including, but not limited to, emission reductions to meet the 1.5°C target, provision of adequate and predictable climate finance, progress on adaptation goal, clarity on compensation for loss and damage. *We stress on* the need for finalization of the Paris Agreement rulebook where elements of NDC timeframe, transparency and carbon markets are still pending.

We urge AMCEN to continue ensuring that the African countries remain committed to updating their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and to highlight the need for the global community, in particular developed countries, to fully support the NDCs of African Parties to the Paris Agreement, as full implementation hinges on provision of adequate means of implementation.

We call for transformative partnerships for Climate Action globally and in Africa, with meaningful engagement of African Major Groups and Stakeholders, including through the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action.

(e) Africa's engagement in the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

We call for a well-articulated and comprehensive declaration from AMCEN that prioritizes African issues for the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as agreed at the African ministers meeting on the sidelines of the 14th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in 2018.

We urge AMCEN to commit to active engagement in the negotiations and successful implementation of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework once adopted through consultations and involvement of African Major Groups and Stakeholders. *We urge* AMCEN to address biodiversity loss without jeopardizing benefits for indigenous peoples and local communities.

We encourage AMCEN to take an active role and agree on an African position on area-based targets for the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, considering the importance of area-based targets in Africa, at the IUCN African Protected Areas Congress, to take place in 2022, in Kigali, Rwanda.

(f) Plastic and Chemical Pollution

We draw attention to the problem of plastic pollution, a major threat globally and in Africa, which has serious economic, environmental, and social consequences that can derail our progress towards sustainable development.

We recall that in the Durban Declaration, adopted at the 17th African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) in November 2019, African Countries committed to, “Supporting global action to address plastic pollution which will require further work to engage more effectively on global governance issues on 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 lifecycle of plastics”.

We are saddened that challenges such as influx of plastic products and plastic waste remain common in Africa despite the bans enacted proactively by several African countries, particularly the prohibition of the manufacture, distribution and trade of plastic carrier bags.

We stress that bans alone will not solve the issue of plastic pollution and that it must be tackled through a systemic, comprehensive and multilayered approach, addressing failures across the full lifecycle of plastics.

We express our staunch support to the submission by the African Group at the final meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Expert Group on marine litter and microplastics (AHEG) in 2020, which recommended that “UNEA-5 delivers the solution [...] by providing the negotiation mandate for a new legally binding instrument to combat plastic pollution”¹.

We further express our strong support to the Decision 3/8 of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention in February 2020 which included a “call for a new legally binding global agreement to combat plastic pollution, covering the full life cycle of plastics, with a view to reducing both the quantity and the harmful qualities of plastic wastes, highlighting the elimination of the trade, production and use of single-use plastics and the substitution and re-design of such products, while emphasizing the importance of technology research and transfer, and the need for adequate financing to enable African countries to prevent plastic pollution”².

We therefore call on AMCEN to take two concrete steps towards ending plastic pollution at this meeting. First, *we call on* AMCEN to formally support the Ministerial statement produced following the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution that took place on September 1st and 2nd 2021. Second, *we call on* AMCEN to adopt a declaration of support for the Rwanda-Peru draft resolution that was presented during the Ministerial Conference referred to above.

(g) UNEP @50 Stockholm + 50 in Africa

We recognize the strides in environment and development attained globally and particularly in Africa since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972.

We recognize and welcome the key coordinating role of UNEP in environmental multilateralism and the negotiations of treaties, resolutions and decisions pertaining to the environment.

We further recognize and welcome UNEP’s facilitation of global, regional and national environmental policymaking and implementation through, inter alia, the support of environmental negotiations, environmental education, environmental law, environmental assessments and the promotion of access to environmental information.

1

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34194/African%20Group%20Item%205.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32131/BamakoCOP3Report.pdf>

We commend UNEP for its support of and coordination with Major Groups and Stakeholders in Africa and globally.

We express our profound appreciation that the UNEP Headquarters is located in Africa, *we express our firm belief* that Africa must be an important component of the identity of UNEP and *we invite* UNEP to further strengthen its work in Africa.

We acknowledge and welcome the positive effects of the work of UNEP in driving and developing the understanding of the environment and nature through, inter alia, the science-policy interface.

We highlight the importance of commemorating the United Nations Environmental Programme in the Special Session of the Assembly devoted to the 50th anniversary of UNEP that will take place on March 3 - 4, 2022.

We pledge support and cooperation in the preparations towards this vital event.

We call on AMCEN to lend its support and active participation to a successful UNEP@50 commemoration that results in tangible and positive outcomes globally and for Africa.

We underline that the commemoration of UNEP@50 provides a key opportunity to reflect on the impact and role of UNEP in the last 50 years through a detailed analysis of UNEP as an institution focusing on UNEP's core mandates, to enable us to envision the future of the UNEP we want in Africa and globally.

We recall that the commemoration of UNEP@50 can also provide an opportunity to take stock of, endorse or adopt the outcome of the consultation process under General Assembly Resolution 73/333, entitled "Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277".

We call on AMCEN to demand an increase, particularly from developed countries, in financial support for UNEP and the implementation of its work programme.

(h) Conclusion

We finally call on African leaders and AMCEN to recognize that environmental challenges in Africa cannot be attended in silos or within the constraints of national or regional boundaries, therefore, *we recall* the important role we play in the effective implementation of resolutions and decisions made at these fora and *we request* for more meaningful and constant inclusion, in particular of women, youth and vulnerable communities.

STATEMENT BY AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO THE FIRST PART OF THE 18TH ORDINARY SESSION OF AMCEN

Summary Statement as delivered

Merci infiniment M. le Président,

Nous vous communiquons nos plus chaleureuses félicitations et serons heureux de travailler en partenariat avec vous. Nous remercions également la présidence sortante de l'Afrique du Sud pour son labeur engagé.

Les messages clés ayant été convenus par le groupe en Anglais, je m'exprimerai en anglais.

Honourable President,

Esteemed Executive Director,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Fellow African Major Groups and Stakeholders,

I am Ayman Cherkaoui with the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection; and, as a Regional Facilitator, I have the honour of reading this summary statement on behalf of the African Major Groups and Stakeholders. The full statement has been shared with the Secretariat and will be made available online.

We urge AMCEN to enhance their commitment to conserving, protecting and enhancing the resilience of Africa's environment, animals, and natural resources as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

We request AMCEN to take decisive action on underlying pandemic risks, unsustainable consumption and production, transformation of food systems, climate crisis, nature crisis, pollution and waste crisis.

We further urge the International Community, particularly Developed Countries, as well as African Countries to provide adequate resources to address environmental issues and support new and existing programmes such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel, the African Renewable Energy Initiative, the African Adaptation Initiative and the regional Climate Commissions.

We commend AMCEN for its role in providing strategic and policy guidance for the creation of the African Green Stimulus Programme.

We strongly encourage African Countries to adopt and support the African Green Stimulus Programme in an inclusive manner.

We request for the meaningful inclusion of African Major Groups and Stakeholders in the Coordinating Committee of the Africa Green Stimulus Programme.

We deplore that the increased dependency, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, of international multilateralism on digital platforms has constricted spaces with African and Major Groups and Stakeholders as the most affected due to poor internet connectivity and funding constraints.

We call upon African countries to support the African Group of Negotiators during the forthcoming Climate COP to finalize the Paris Agreement rulebook and oblige developed countries to fulfil their commitments such as emission reductions to meet the 1.5°C target, provision of adequate and predictable climate finance, progress on adaptation and clarity on compensation for loss and damage.

We urge AMCEN to commit to active engagement in the negotiations and successful implementation of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework once adopted and address biodiversity loss without jeopardizing benefits for indigenous peoples and local communities.

We draw attention to the problem of plastic pollution which has serious economic, environmental, and social consequences.

We express our staunch support to the submission by the African Group that concluded that “UNEA-5 delivers the solution [...] by providing the negotiation mandate for a new legally binding instrument to combat plastic pollution”.

We further express our strong support to Decision 3/8 of the Bamako Convention which also called for a new legally binding global agreement to combat plastic pollution.

We therefore call on AMCEN to formally support the Ministerial statement and the Rwanda-Peru draft resolution that were presented during the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution of September 2021.

We welcome UNEP’s facilitation of global, regional and national environmental policymaking and implementation through, inter alia, support of environmental negotiations, education, policies, law, assessments and the promotion of access to environmental information.

We welcome the approval of the medium-term strategy for the period 2022 - 2025 and the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022 - 2023.

We encourage African Countries to participate actively at UNEA 5.2 under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”.

We express our profound appreciation that the UNEP Headquarters are located in Africa, *express our firm belief* that Africa must be an important component of the identity of UNEP and *support* the call by the African group for a more coordinated regional delivery of the programme of work including through strengthening UNEP in Nairobi.

We highlight the importance of commemorating UNEP @50 and *pledge* support and cooperation in the preparations towards this vital event.

We call on AMCEN to lend its support and active participation to a successful UNEP @50 commemoration that results in tangible and positive outcomes globally and for Africa.

We finally call on AMCEN to recognize that environmental challenges cannot be attended to in silos, *recall* the important role we play in the effective implementation of resolutions and decisions made at these fora and *request* meaningful and constant inclusion, in particular of women, youth and vulnerable communities.

**STATEMENT AND KEY MESSAGES OF AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS
AND STAKEHOLDERS IN COMMEMORATION OF WORLD
ENVIRONMENT DAY - 2021**

English Version

We, the representatives of the African Civil Society as Major Groups and Stakeholders having reflected on the theme of the World Environment Day and our role in achieving ecosystem restoration as part of its observance, issue this joint statement as a call for action.

Commending World Leaders for all their efforts and progress made in articulating the developmental and ecological needs of the world including the need for ecosystem restoration. Particularly commending the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/284 - the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030 and the African Union for the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience.

Recognizing that the majority of rural communities in Africa depend on ecosystems for their livelihoods and survival; and that the vitality and diversity of Earth's ecosystems are essential for resilience, sustainable development, poverty alleviation and are the basis for future human prosperity and well-being.

Recognizing that urban and peri-urban populations in Africa experience dire outcomes such as floods, deforestation, human-wildlife conflict and land pollution due to the adverse impacts on the environment through encroachment on wildlife protected areas and other fragile ecosystems, poor city planning, disruption of pre-existing migration patterns, and the lack of adequate public education and awareness.

Concerned by the fact that our environmental situation is gradually reaching a crisis point with severe degradation of a wide range of ecosystems in the region resulting in decline or irreparable loss of biodiversity, with many of the predicted one million species threatened with extinction being in Africa. This imperils the communities dependent on ecosystems, animals and biodiversity for various purposes, such as food, livelihoods, clean water, disease regulation, climate regulation, spiritual fulfillment, and aesthetic enjoyment.

Noting that the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is an opportunity to halt and reverse this degradation so as to help nature and ecosystems to heal. The Decade of Ecosystem Restoration contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union Agenda 2063 goals, and the Paris Agreement

through deliberate restoration action which brings ecosystems as near as possible to its natural state by allowing them to regenerate naturally.

Noting that an ambitious post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is essential and supportive towards effective ecosystem restoration. To be effective, this must identify the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem destruction, and address these through transformative change. Restoration can only be meaningful if based on future prevention.

Recognizing that millions of indigenous peoples still live in their traditional homeland are custodians of valuable ecological wisdom needed for ecosystem restoration, our link to least disturbed habitats and pristine ecosystems and are our last link to rare, endangered, and fast disappearing flora and fauna

We therefore call for:

- Restorative action and agenda that promises a healthy future for our world that harmonizes science, indigenous knowledge, faith, policy, practice and law and recognizes the need for an integrated approach that cuts across ecological boundaries and ensures coordination and collaboration with state, local, regional and international levels and recognizes the key role of non-state actors, in conformance to the principle to ‘Leave No One Behind’.
- Ecosystem restoration integrated with plans for ecosystem protection, conservation, stewardship, rehabilitation and remediation and driven by explicit goals, policies, protocols, morals and practices, and made adaptable by monitoring and research based on our best understanding of the ecological interactions and processes necessary to sustain ecosystem composition, structure and function.
- Ecosystem restoration that should uphold the precautionary principle in national ecosystem restoration plans, policies and laws while operationalizing and implementing the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for increased resilience.
- Commitment by member states to make restoration a legally viable concept that has a common language for determining whether there is compliance with the goal by agencies, courts, interest groups and the International community.
- Identification of the full intrinsic and extrinsic value of ecosystems on a local scale, measuring their current value and projecting their future values and strategies developed for ensuring that benefits of ecosystem services are incorporated directly into decision making.
- Emphasis on the need for Investment in education, research and local pilots to generate relevant data and information,

- Emphasis on the need for better awareness and understanding as well urgent and impactful action to tackle the issue of the growing impact of plastics on ecosystems, in particular marine ecosystems.
- Recognition by States and World leaders of the dominant principles and themes of ecosystem restoration and management including: rewilding to restore natural balance; hierarchical contest; ecological boundaries; ecological integrity; data collection; sustainability; monitoring; adaptive management; interagency cooperation; organizational change; embedment of human in nature; and human values.
- Ecosystem restoration goals that are within the overall goal of ecological integrity, including a commitment to maintaining viable populations of all native species; represent all native ecosystem types across their natural range of variation within protected areas; maintain evolutionary and ecological processes; maintain and manage evolutionary potentials of species and ecosystems over periods of time; and accommodate human use and occupancy within these constraints.
- The Establishment of an Ecosystem Restoration Coordinating Group with representation of Africa Major Groups and Stakeholders to research and address complex issues that arise; improve coordination, communication and adoption of standard terminology; facilitate the standardization of data sharing; identify capacity gaps and needs of participating states and agencies and encourage and coordinate cooperation and collaboration at the national, sub-national, across the region and at the global level.
- An ambitious post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, based on transformative change which addresses the drivers of biodiversity loss, with an effective monitoring framework and adequate and predictable means of implementation especially financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer.
- Investment in community-based projects that are aimed at ecosystem restoration, sustainable management and conservation of ecosystems to provide services that help people adapt to climate change as part of the action to enhance the implementation of UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration without jeopardizing benefits for indigenous peoples and local communities.
- An urgent halt to any economic incentives, including subsidies, which are harmful to biodiversity and ecosystems. This was already included in Aichi Target 3 of the previous framework, but was not implemented by most countries. Now is the time for all countries to stop funding ecosystem destruction, and re-focus on prevention and restoration.
- All Member States to develop and implement policy and legal frameworks or reform existing ones to enable or incentivise for national ecosystem restoration

or create disincentives for activities and processes causing ecosystem degradation, including tenure related drivers.

- Women, youth and non-state actors to be proactively engaged in the development and implementation of ecosystem restoration policies, projects and programmes in all Member States.
- Cooperation across international, regional and national levels in developing standardised relevant tools, technologies designs for implementation, monitoring and reporting on ecosystem restoration initiatives within stipulated timeframes.
- Coordination and synergies at all levels with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
- Coordination and synergies at all levels amongst the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (the CBD, UNFCCC, Ramsar and others) in order to harmoniously implement the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for increased resilience.
- States to promote co-management models for our ecosystems with communities in order to strengthen ownership.

DRAFT

**STATEMENT BY AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS
TO COP 26/CMP16/CMA3**

Full statement (English Version)

We, the Major Groups and Stakeholders from the African region, gathered to attend COP26/CMA3/CMP16 in Glasgow both in person and virtually, representing the African Major Groups and Stakeholders accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme, agree on the following key messages to COP26/CMA3/CMP16:

We remain deeply alarmed by the recent IPCC Sixth Assessment Report that raises further concerns to the African continent as the most adversely impacted by Climate Change with, among other, having the highest increased surface temperature, sea level rise, and frequency and intensity of the climate extreme events.

We strongly deplore the weakened participation of African Major Groups and Stakeholders at COP26/CMA3/CMP16, due to an ever increasing list of challenges, most of them embedded in a profound lack of international equity and climate injustice that Africa disproportionately suffers from.

We further strongly deplore the lack of opportunities of engagement for the African Major Groups and Stakeholders that, through great efforts, were able to take part in person to COP26/CMA3/CMP16.

We express our full support to the African Group of Negotiators in securing the optimal outcomes for Africa at COP26/CMA3/CMP16.

We welcome the encouraging efforts taken by a number of African countries to build the foundations for low-carbon and resilient socioeconomic development and build back better amid the COVID-19 pandemic and *reiterate* our support to the *African Green Stimulus Programme*. These efforts need to be supported, inter alia, by facilitating technology transfer to Africa, optimizing the local context, accelerating the creation of local green manufacturing capabilities, creating jobs and spearheading Africa's industrial development.

We reaffirm that upholding and increasing international and national obligations and commitments, particularly by developed countries, is a matter of urgency and survival for Africa.

We recall that Climate Ambition and Action must be envisioned, designed, implemented, reported on and evaluated in the context of sustainable development.

We regret the strong focus of COP26 on long term pledges and plans as opposed to supporting urgently needed action, including through existing initiatives, particularly in Africa.

We express our doubts about how new mid century pledges and promises made during COP26 will translate into concrete actions on the ground and express our strong alignment with remarks made by Mrs. Vanessa Nakate from Uganda who declared during the Global Climate Action High-Level Event in Glasgow on November 11th 2021: “We don’t believe you. Please prove us wrong”.

We demand that Global North leaders heed the messages of African and Global South leaders on all issues linked to climate change, particularly in meeting their financial pledges and allocating sufficient resources in support for adaptation and mitigation in a balanced way, while taking into consideration loss and damage for the most vulnerable.

We call upon Parties to put the role of nature and biodiversity at the heart of commitments towards climate mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

We further call upon Parties to embrace and promote a One Health Approach to make Africa safer and healthier for humans, animals, plants, and their shared environment.

We further call for transformative partnerships for Climate Action globally and in Africa, with meaningful engagement of African Major Groups and Stakeholders, including through the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action.

We urge Parties to forego silos and work in close collaboration across all multilateral forums in 2022, including in the context of COP27/CMP17/CMA4, UNEP 5.2, CBD 15.2, UNEP @50, Stockholm +50.

We look forward to COP27/CMP17/CMA4, the first African COP since COP22 in Marrakech in Morocco, to be hosted in Egypt and *commit our full support* to the incoming Egyptian Presidency.

We request more meaningful and constant inclusion of African Major Groups and Stakeholders in the work of the UNFCCC, in particular of women, youth and vulnerable communities.