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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Ninth special session
Ministerial meeting
Online, 17 February 2022

Ministerial statement and key policy messages of the ninth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

We, the African ministers for the environment,

Convening online on 17 February 2022 for the ninth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the ministerial statement and key policy messages made at the first part of the eighteenth session of the Conference that took place on 16 September 2021, especially on the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and the special session of the Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Noting the recommendations made by the Bureau of the Conference at its thirty-second meeting held on 17 and 18 November 2021, and

Aware of the importance of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme that will take place in Nairobi from 28 February 2022 to 2 March 2022, and the special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme to be held on 3 and 4 March 2022,

Do hereby state as follows:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to continue speaking with one voice on matters affecting Africa and in the unity of Africa.
2. We affirm the recommendations made by the Bureau at its thirty-second meeting held on 17 and 18 November 2021, including on the organisation of this special session.
3. We urge all member States to actively participate in the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Environment Programme and affirm our commitment to the key policy messages that guide our resolve as set out in the annex to this statement.

4. We express our appreciation and support to the Dean and the entire African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, within the Committee of Permanent Representatives, for the excellent preparations of Africa region's participation in the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

5. We express our support to Africa region's sponsored draft resolutions, including on green recovery, biodiversity and health, and circular economy, and encourage member states to support, as appropriate, other resolutions, in line with the positions expressed by the Africa group concerning the issues discussed under the agenda of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and strive to support other resolutions of interest to Africa.

6. We request member States to volunteer to lead in negotiating and contribute to the negotiations of the resolutions and the ministerial declaration of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to ensure the interests of Africa are taken into consideration.

7. We urge all member States to actively participate in and contribute to the ministerial declaration of the special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and other related events, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme.

8. We agree to convene on 28 February 2022 prior to the start of the proceedings of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to select Africa's representative and President of the Bureau of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and in this regard, request the secretariat to make arrangements for the conduct of an in-person secret ballot, unless consensus is attained before.

9. We will support the in-coming President and Senegal during their full term of two years, as President and Vice-President, respectively, of the Bureau of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to ensure their tenure is successful.

10. We appreciate the efforts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, represented by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, for facilitating consensus building on the issue of Africa's nominee for the Presidency of the Bureau of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

11. We will strive for Africa to speak with one voice on the proposal for a global approach and global legally binding agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution and on the possible launch of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to negotiate a new global instrument on marine litter and plastic pollution. In this regard, we endorse the proposal by the Bureau of the Conference to establish a core group of countries composed of the representatives of the current Bureau of the Conference, namely, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Senegal and Sudan, any other interested African country, and the African Group in Nairobi, with Rwanda and Ghana as the co-chairs, to take the lead on behalf of the African region in the discussions on marine litter and plastic pollution.

12. We encourage the major groups and stakeholders in Africa to actively participate in the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and encourage them to support resolutions that are of interest to Africa.

13. We appreciate the role of Algeria, in its capacity as the African representative to the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, for leading and coordinating the preparations for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme.

14. We express our appreciation to the President of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly for the consultations on the draft ministerial declaration, and call for an ambitious, balanced ministerial declaration that recognizes all recent and upcoming key United Nations conferences on the environment, as well as the principles on which multilateral environmental treaties are based, especially the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and ensure that the issue of raising the ambition of the global environmental action, the urgent need for the provision of sufficient, adequate and predictable financial and technical support, means of implementation by developed countries to developing countries, and the necessity to take into consideration countries' national circumstances, contexts and capabilities are addressed in a balanced manner as well as the right of Africa to its development space with enabling means of implementation support.

15. We will support Côte d'Ivoire in hosting the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to be held in Abidjan, from 9 to 20 May 2022 and urge member states to actively participate in the deliberations and urge all African institutions to support the conference.

16. We reiterate our full support and commitment to the Arab Republic of Egypt in hosting the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and request all African institutions to provide any needed support, and urge all African institutions to support the conference, in this regard.

17. We recognize the importance for African countries to reach a new, ambitious, and fair global biodiversity framework agreement that enables society to reverse the current biodiversity loss in order to maintain our planet's life-support system, and to chart sustainable pathways forward that integrate biodiversity into decisions and practices, especially supporting the efforts of developing countries in implementing and achieving biodiversity positive outcomes.

18. We express our appreciation to the secretariat of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the African Union Commission for their continued commitment and support towards the organisation and holding this special session.

19. We mandate the President of the Conference to convey the content of this ministerial statement and key messages and the report made by this ninth special session to all relevant parties, including partners and organisations, with a view to enlist their support and collaboration, and to report thereon to the Conference at its resumed eighteenth ordinary session.

Annex

Key policy messages

1. We appreciate the work of the Africa group in Nairobi who have continued to advocate for the interests of Africa in the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. We welcome the decision to hold, the resumed second part of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly and the special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, and the relevant preparatory meetings, in a hybrid format and call for all measures to be taken to ensure transparent, full, inclusive, meaningful and equal participation of all member States and relevant stakeholders to consider substantive matters that require negotiations, regardless of which format they participate in, with all efforts made to accommodate small delegations by avoiding parallel meetings and consultations, as far as possible.
3. We call for a full, inclusive and transparent participation by all member states and regional groups on the consultation processes to prepare the draft political declaration pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/333, in a manner that leaves no member state or regional group behind while stressing that transparency and inclusiveness are conducive to achieving a meaningful consensual declaration to be adopted at the special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme.
4. We urge that the political declaration, that will be made pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/333, should reflect the various interests of developing countries and those of Africa, including the necessity to maintain the Rio de Janeiro principles especially the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, which are the foundation of multilateral environmental treaties, and the centrality of the issue of the provision by developed countries and other partners in a position to do so of financial and technical support, as a requirement for achieving international environmental objectives.
5. We would like to underline the importance of strengthening the United Nations Office in Nairobi as the only United Nations headquarters in the global south and host of the United Nations Environment Programme.
6. We call upon the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare and adopt a new global approach which may include the launch of intergovernmental negotiating committee to negotiate a new global instrument to address the issue of marine litter and plastic pollution.
7. On the draft resolution on marine litter and plastic pollution, presented by Rwanda and supported by the Conference, we will take into consideration additional draft resolutions on the same topic, to guarantee the interests of African member states as far as they are in line with the resolution presented by Rwanda, and work towards having a new global approach to address plastics pollution, in accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of national circumstances. Noting the right of African countries to development and gaps between developing and developed countries in terms of historical responsibility, scientific knowledge, capacity, technological advances, technical and financial support in the fight against marine waste and plastic pollution
8. We stress the importance of the recognition of the special needs and circumstances of Africa, and the need for new, additional and predictable finance, including technology transfer, development and deployment as well as capacity building to support developing countries, in particular for Africa for its implementation. Furthermore, we stress the need

to ensure coherence and coordination of activities undertaken by existing regional and international instruments, which encompass a supporting structure for implementation in developing countries.

9. On biodiversity post-2020 Global Framework, we encourage African countries to support ambitious targets for global protection and financing of protected areas.