

# **Statement of the African Major Groups & Stakeholders to the Resumed Eighteenth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment Held in Dakar, Senegal**

## **Preamble**

We, the African Major Groups and Stakeholders, having met in-person in Dakar, Senegal, and consulted online, on the occasion of the Resumed Eighteenth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), hereby adopt the following Statement.

We congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, on the occasion of the Presidency of the Fifteenth Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, one of the most successful UNCCD COPs to date; the Republic of Senegal, on the occasion of the Presidency of the Resumed Eighteenth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment; the Republic of Egypt, on the occasion of the Presidency of the Twenty-Seventh Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the first UNFCCC COP to be held in Africa since COP 22; and the Kingdom of Morocco on the occasion of becoming the first African Presidency of a United Nations Environment Assembly.

## **Addressing environmental challenges and opportunities in Africa in the post-COVID-19 era**

### ***(a) Enhancing implementation of the decisions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, including the Africa Green Stimulus Programme;***

Noting 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 greener and sustainable manner.

The Programme must be implemented in a manner that brings about a common and unifying continental response by enhancing and forging cooperation and partnerships between and among African governments, non-state actors, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector in support of a comprehensive green recovery for Africa. It needs to involve local communities in its design and implementation.

We call on AMCEN to regularly and transparently report on progress made towards implementing the African Green Stimulus Programme, outlining its challenges, successes, and impact on the resilience of our ecosystems, communities and economies.

### ***(b) Collaboration between the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and African Ministers for finance and economic planning;***

We call on Ministries of Environment to do more with their Ministries of Finance, Economies, Planning, and other relevant ministries to mainstream adaptation, loss & damage, and climate risk into policies, planning, and financing of our own budgets and planning processes at national and subnational level to advance a just, resilient and equitable transition. They must leverage the Africa Green Stimulus Program and fully implement AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2032.

As a minimum, we demand all African governments adjust their NDCs to provide for creation of employment and green decent job opportunities for young people and women at the frontline of the climate crisis including jobs in the circular economy. This must be an integral part of the Nationally Determined Contributions as well as in programmes funded under global financing mechanisms.

**(c.) Enhancing the role of women and youth in decision-making and implementation in achieving land degradation neutrality**

Decisions on Land restoration should be inclusive and enable the effective participation of youth and women who are most affected by climate change and land degradation. Implementation of land restoration initiatives should also be transparent and should prioritize the creation of income-generating opportunities for women and youth.

**(d) Ensuring land tenure security for communities**

We recognize that most communities in African member states do have legal ownership of the lands. We cannot address land degradation if the community legal owner is not recognized, therefore funding should be made available to support so as to enable land tenure security. Additionally, land restoration should be done in consultation with local communities who are the important stakeholders and as such should be treated as an important partner in addressing land degradation and combating desertification.

We recognize that some member states have existing legal infrastructures that recognise community land rights, however, these have not been fully implemented. We encourage AMCEN to facilitate the consolidation and implementation of these existing laws so as to enable the different community states under this category to have full rights to their lands under legal backing.

**(e) Promoting sustainable soil management**

We recognize the role of healthy soil in addressing land degradation, increasing agricultural productivity, biodiversity conservation and its ability to store carbon. However, healthy soils have been affected by climate change and unsustainable land use practices, hence leading to poor land yield, increased vulnerability and biodiversity loss. We encourage AMCEN to ensure that adequate investments are made to promote sustainable soil management and governance.

**(f) Phasing out of open waste burning**

Given the major environmental, social and health impacts of open waste burning in Africa, particularly for vulnerable communities, we encourage: 1) the introduction of national regulation

and local bylaws that prohibit open waste burning of all kinds at the neighbourhood level and effectively enforce these regulations and bylaws through combination of neighbourhood community policing, self-regulation and financial fines; 2) the introduction of measures to incentivise separation of waste at the source and reuse of waste as a secondary resource input starting from the household levels through methods such as composting of biodegradable waste for urban agricultural production; 3) support to existing private enterprises and informal waste service providers and organize new ones, with particular focus on women and youth groups, to actively engage in reprocessing waste into valuable products that can create jobs, generate incomes and sustain livelihoods; and 4) the development and implementation of integrated solid waste management systems for African cities and rural areas with particular emphasis on utilizing waste as a secondary resource input based on the principle of circularity that prioritize environmental conservation.

**Outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, preparations for the twenty-seventh session and the following:**

*(a) Africa Adaptation Initiative;*

*As part of approaching adaptation in a broader manner here assert:*

1. The AMCEN must put adaptation on top of the agenda at COP27. This entails, among others, that the Glasgow-Sharm-El-Sheikh work programme on Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) must be operationalised to elaborate on the GGA by COP28. COP27 must also deliver an ambitious plan on how to meet the current and future needs for adaptation finance in Africa by 2025 and beyond. In this regard, COP27 should agree on a dedicated and ambitious global adaptation finance goal
2. We recognize the importance of enabling African Member States to identify, manage and adapt to transboundary and cascading climate risks in line with Africa's Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032). We call for capacity-building measures on transboundary climate risk, support enhanced coordination between the regional economic communities and Member States in addressing such risks, and recommend stronger regional and global cooperation on adaptation to build resilience to the impacts of climate change.
3. Additional financing of adaptation – recognizing that the overall funding available for climate action is limited, inadequate and more skewed towards mitigation, through the discussions on the global goal on adaptation, the newly published IPCC report (AR6) pursue doubling of adaptation financing with clear absolute financial allocations. Additional financing for loss and damage should not compromise funding for adaptation.

*Specific to the Africa Adaptation Initiative:*

4. We call on the AMCEN to further recognize the Africa Adaptation Initiative's importance for the continent's efforts to accelerate adaptation. We call on the AMCEN to provide a

permanent institutional arrangement for the AAI, providing substantial resources - in terms of finance and people - to fully realize its potential. The AMCEN also needs to clearly indicate the mechanisms for countries to access the AAI's knowledge and expertise such that it supports the continent's adaptation needs. Appreciating the broadness of the AAI's mandate, the Initiative needs to embody the Locally Led Adaptation Principles, in order to directly benefit and empower local communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis.

*(b) Climate-altering technologies and measures;*

5. While we reiterate the need for technology as a means of implementation, in Africa, we caution against false solutions that might further exacerbate environmental and climatic conditions. We call on AMCEN to prioritize transformational changes which deal with the root causes of climate change, particularly in food and energy systems, including investments to clean, accessible, and people-centered technologies that support adaptation and enhance energy access for the energy poor in the continent. We must be cautious about climate altering technologies which we consider as false solutions, not a priority in Africa and have potential negative impact on the environment and ecosystems.

*(c) African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032).*

6. In order to fully implement the AU Climate Change and Resilience Development strategy and Action Plan, we call upon AMCEN to enhance member states cooperation and integrate the Strategy into their national policies and planning processes. We reiterate the need for scaled up, predictable, grant based financing from international climate financing mechanisms while encouraging member states to put in place domestic climate change funding mechanisms to support full implementation of the strategy.
7. AMCEN must pursue a commitment at COP27 under which the amount of climate finance reaching local communities is urgently increased, and barriers to accessing climate finance must be removed. More investment is required in local climate action, and the principles for locally led adaptation should be formally endorsed by all Parties to the UNFCCC, including GCF. A new goal for the proportion of climate finance going to local level actions should be considered at COP27 and AMCEN should be at the centre of this influence. This will help in monitoring the progress on driving more and easily accessible climate finance to communities at the frontline of the climate crisis.

*On Loss and damage: Under strategic intervention Axis 3. of the Africa Union Strategy on enhancing means of implementation towards Climate Resilient Development call upon:*

8. It is an imperative of climate justice, and therefore central to AMCEN, that a shared global responsibility for loss and damage is expressed proportionally through a special loss and damage financing facility that channels financial support to those who need it most in Africa. That AMCEN pursues finances for loss and damage should be predictable in quality and quantity and should be separate from Official Development Assistance (ODA), Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. As such we demand that as a basic

minimum, Loss and Damage financing must be a priority agenda in COP 27 with clear timelines on addressing the issue.

9. We appreciate the progressive recognition of a raft of measures within this framework for addressing loss and damage including asset creation and social transfers. Whereas for climate risk insurance, we stand against the deployment and use of climate insurance as well as any other market-based mechanisms as tools for financing loss and damage.
10. To enhance transparency and accountability in climate financing for adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage and in line with the Paris Agreement, demand for transparency and accountability in finance flows to adaptation and loss and damage especially by funding mechanisms established under the UNFCCC.
11. Demand that AMCEN pursues an arrangement under which parties put a clear distinction between loss, damage, and disaster risk reduction as provided in the evidence of AR6 with urgent intervention and frank negotiations on loss and damage, given the evidence already provided by the AR6 report of the IPCC, majorly on the African Continent.
12. AMCEN should, as a priority, demand urgent operationalization of the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD), considering the magnitude of loss and damage in Africa no later than COP27.

### Outcomes of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and preparations for the sixth session of the Assembly

Reflecting on the outcomes of the resumed Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly:

1. We welcome the outcomes of UNEA 5, in particular on the resolutions that were put forward by the African member states.
2. We strongly invite all Member States, including African Member States, to urgently move towards taking measures for the effective implementation of the resolutions adopted at UNEA 5.
3. We further call for more involvement & inclusion of African Major Groups and Stakeholders in the implementation of the resolutions.
4. We urge Member States to forge meaningful and mutually supportive partnerships to support the implementation of the UNEA 5 Resolutions in Africa.

Looking towards the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, we look forward to addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity and pollution at UNEA 6, in a manner that is meaningfully inclusive of the African Major Groups and Stakeholders, and builds on the outcomes of the UNCCD COP 15 that took place in Africa; COP 27, the first UNFCCC COP to be held in Africa since COP 22, and the UN CBD COP 15.

We further urge Member States to strive for stronger alignment and coordination between the agencies responsible for implementing the objectives of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the context of sustainable development, in a manner reflective of the common but differentiated responsibilities, and special needs and circumstances of Africa.

### **Africa's participation in the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment**

1. We are utterly convinced that Africa needs to speak as one voice to restrict the production and the circulation of single-use plastics in the continent as soon as possible and as appropriate within the context of sustainable development. There is legislation restricting plastic production and/or circulation in 34 out of 52 African countries showing a long-term concern with the impact of single-use plastic in health and in the environment. African member states have specific needs and circumstances in relation to the plastics lifecycle. Plastic is a hazardous material that requires strict regulation. Plastic materials are exported to Africa without detailed consideration of the availability of infrastructure and systems to manage plastic waste, generating consistent contamination of soil, water bodies and affecting people's health. The plastic lifecycle is also a major contributor to the climate crisis.
2. We request AMCEN to facilitate the harmonization of existing national legislations and to support the creation of a monitoring unit that manages illegal trade and border surveillance, imposes transparency in plastic production volumes and plastic composition, oversees national implementation of regional agreements, and calls for the domestication of international agreements that address the full lifecycle of plastics and the waste trade.
3. The Global Plastic Treaty negotiations must include the contributions from groups that have a long history in advocacy and that experience the impact of plastic mismanagement. The informal sector, women, youth, indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations must be represented by African member states, with the acknowledgement of their relevance in decision-making bodies and in the development of monitoring systems.
4. The African Major Groups and Stakeholders also call African Member States to advocate for the establishment of technical and financial mechanisms within the treaty, promoting just transitions that are tailored for the needs and circumstances of African member states. A Global Plastic Treaty can only achieve its high ambition with the correction of the historical injustices that condemned the most vulnerable to bare the consequences of non-inclusive decision-making.
5. Lastly, we call AMCEN to facilitate the establishment of an African scientific panel, inclusive of African major groups and stakeholders, to serve as a reliable source of verifiable regional data analytics and research findings that are fact and evidence based and that inform the Global Plastic Treaty decision-making, and the monitoring of implemented legislation.

## Preparations for the resumed fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

1. Whilst appreciating the role of biodiversity for conservation and development in Africa, we reiterate the need for maintaining and enhancing ecological integrity to enable Africa achieve its conservation and development goals. We also appreciate the role of ecological integrity in providing ecosystem services that are important for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as reducing pathogen spillover.
2. We would like to call upon African Member States to work collectively with others towards the adoption and timely implementation of a robust and ambitious Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that enables African countries to maintain and enhance ecological integrity and contributes to a timely solution to the global environmental loss crisis.. The ambition must be matched with the provision of adequate means of implementation, including financing, capacity building and technology transfer.
3. We appreciate the importance of capacity building and resource mobilization for the successful implementation of the global biodiversity framework. Whilst also appreciating the different positions on digital sequencing of information and the access and benefit sharing of genetic resources, we reiterate their importance to support the successful implementation of the global biodiversity framework through equitable benefit sharing, technological transfer and capacity building and therefore encourage African parties to speak with one voice in the negotiations.
4. We note the proposed Target 3 in the GBF and its role in area-based conservation. We would like to highlight that this must not only be accompanied by other effective area based conservation measures, but also by transformation in consumption and production, especially through circular economy, to achieve sustainable production across sectors, further protecting ecosystems and biodiversity. This should also be implemented taking into account national priorities and circumstances, be gender responsive, inclusive of youth and respecting the rights of IPLCs in accordance with UNDRIP and international human rights law.
5. We recognize the role of ecosystem restoration in reversing the degradation of ecosystems to regain their ecological functionality; in other words, to improve the productivity and capacity of ecosystems to meet the needs of society. Restoration should seek to enhance the integrity and connectivity of ecosystems and habitats using landscapes and seascapes approach. Africa shall work to raise the inclusion and profile of restoration in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
6. While we agree that resources must flow from developed to developing countries to meet the biodiversity financing gap, as articulated in article 20 of the Convention, at an accelerated pace, we believe that African Member States must also increase domestic resource mobilization for biodiversity.

7. One of the points of failure in the Aichi Targets was the lack of a robust implementation and monitoring mechanism. This must be strengthened in the Post-2020 GBF and taking into account the Human Rights Based Approach, whole society and whole government approach.
8. We welcome the increasing recognition of local and subnational governments in the Post-2020 GBF, to support locally-led implementation and the achievement of its goals and targets. Local and subnational governments are in direct contact with the communities in the frontlines of the biodiversity and climate crises and can make important contributions to ensuring people-centered implementation of the framework.
9. We call on African Member States to support the whole of government and whole of society approach to ensure implementation, and to support the adoption of the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities at CBD COP 15 (CBD/SBI/REC/3/14); and further to strengthen accountability and implementation of the Post-2020 GBF through the planning, monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms.
10. In order to address the impacts of business on biodiversity, we call upon African Member States to support the implementation of the Task Force on Nature Related Financial Disclosures by Business to ensure businesses account for the impacts of the businesses, across the entire value chains, on biodiversity and ecosystems. Safeguards must be put in place against greenwashing
11. We believe that new laws must be taken within the framework of animal protection on the conservation of nature for other living species in occurrence Butterflies which are regularly present in scientific news because their study makes it possible to apprehend the limits of adaptation mechanisms of species to climate change and are essential links in reproduction but generally appreciated for their beauty and elegance, in view of constituting living pictures.

**Outcomes of 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**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that governments all around the world took urgent action. Regrettably, this is in sharp contrast with the urgency and action we see on combating desertification, land degradation and drought.

These key points are essential to take the urgent actions that are needed:

1. **On gender:** ensure that the Gender Action Plan and its road map are not stand-alone documents within the COP discussions, add gender experts to SPI and other subsidiary bodies.

2. **On sustainable land management and land restoration:** promote and support agroecological approaches and regenerative practices as solutions for soil health, biodiversity, and adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and as a way to synergize the three Rio Conventions.
3. **On finance:** promote and develop finance mechanisms to support knowledge and practice development of land users together with scientists and Major Groups and Stakeholders to improve and upscale agroecological approaches and regenerative practices.
4. **Humanize Drought:** give drought a human face and better understand the impacts of this disaster on the lives of children, women, men, farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and local communities. Considering that these people are vulnerable because of the magnitude of the situation they are in, we therefore, strongly encourage that UNCCD documents refer to them as “people in a situation of vulnerability” and not as “vulnerable people”.
5. **On Land rights and tenure:** raise awareness on the Technical Guide at national and subnational level, by working under an intersectoral approach and engaging non-state stakeholders in the process and by requesting FAO, UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism to support capacity building and participatory workshops on the Technical Guide and the translation into local languages. The COVID Pandemic showed us that we as an international community are able to work together and take urgent action. We encourage the parties to actively engage with Africa major groups and stakeholders as we are working closely with the communities where the practical actions on sustainable land management and restoration are being taken.

#### **Matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

1. We stress that transforming social and economic systems means improving our relationship with nature; understanding its value and placing it at the heart of our decision-making
2. We urge AMCEN to involve African major groups and stakeholders in the formulation of strategy documents as well as monitoring & evaluation mechanisms to combat the effects of environmental decline on key sectors: energy and water production, consumption patterns and efficient use of resources.
3. We call for AMCEN to uphold the democratic character of United Nations processes by increasing time granted to the African major groups and other stakeholders to articulate their issues of concern as providers of checks and balances and also the vital linkages, particularly highlighting bottom-up approaches, with the practice level of grassroot communities.

#### **Other Matters**

We recognize the strong link between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development; and applaud the now quadripartite multilateral establishment of WHO, FAO, WOA and UNEP, an initiative that recognizes the One Health Approach. We call for investment in communications of animal welfare regulation at the local, national and regional level; and

introducing sustainable solutions to manage human and wildlife interactions; the effective enforcement of wildlife trafficking legislation; and strengthen school programmes on environment and animal welfare.