



AMCEN



AU



Distr.: General
6 July 2023

Original: English
English and French only

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Nineteenth session

Addis Ababa, 14–18 August 2023

Preparations for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of United Nations Environment Programme*

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme will be held from 26 February to 1 March 2024, at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, Kenya.
2. During a joint Bureau meeting of the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 30 January 2023, the Bureau of the Environment Assembly decided that the theme for the sixth session of the Assembly will be defined as follows: “*Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution*”.
3. The Assembly is expected to attract heads of state and governments, including managers of selected cities to participate and share in the perspectives and experience in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
4. This note aims to stimulate discussions during the nineteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, on how Africa can better engage in the sixth session of the Environment Assembly. This will include technical discussion in the development of resolutions, inputs into the ministerial declaration, and consideration of the various high-level dialogues, including issuance of national statements. Enhanced participation and contribution of technical experts of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment is paramount.

II. Focus of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

5. The world is in the midst of three major interconnected environmental crises: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, which are compounded by widening inequality, conflicts and emerging risks. These are largely driven by human activity and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. Tackling these three crises is critical to improving the health of our planet, our economies and societies and achieving Sustainable Development Goals during this critical Decade of Action.
6. Effective, inclusive and sustainable actions to tackle these multiple crises calls for a transformative, inter-generational and science-based approach that can manage present and anticipate emerging risks with global solidarity while advancing the realization of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all. This approach builds on the Medium-Term Strategy

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

2022-2025 of the United Nations Environment Programme which identifies solutions for climate action, nature action and chemicals and pollution action.

7. Effective and inclusive actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are indispensable to restore trust in global and national governance systems, strengthen equitable societal participation in environmental decision-making, and leverage the environmental rule of law to achieve sustainable development. Achieving these goals and moving towards a climate-stable, in harmony with nature, and pollution-free future where no one is left behind requires a transformative approach that synergistically harnesses the actions and contributions of all States, major groups and stakeholders and accelerates and scales up the implementation of existing commitments toward sustainable patterns of consumption and production for all sectors underpinning our economies and societies.

8. The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly provides a centre stage of environmental multilateralism and reinvigorated leadership that can deliver timely, effective and inclusive actions commensurate with the scale and speed of response needed to strengthen the resilience to global risks and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

9. Furthermore, the theme for the sixth session of the Environment Assembly will provide a platform to draw on the indispensable capacities of youth, local and regional authorities, businesses and the private sector, and academic and scientific institutions, amongst others, to promote effective, inclusive and sustainable civil society actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

10. Therefore, at the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, Member States will lead global discussions to find sustainable, science-based solutions for people and planet and drive the change towards the future we want.

III. Scenario of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

11. The sixth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives will be held from 19 to 23 February 2024 at the United Nations Environment Headquarters in Nairobi, preceding the Assembly. The Open-Ended session will discuss technical details of the agenda and build on the preparatory work undertaken by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly during the inter-sessional period.

12. Most of the technical work will be concluded at the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting and during the Committee of the Whole, including final draft resolutions and decisions, and the Ministerial declaration that will be considered for adoption by the Assembly after their approval by the Committee of the Whole.

13. Other meetings on the margins of the Committee and Assembly will include: Major Groups and Stakeholders and Science Policy Business Forum.

14. The draft Ministerial declaration for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly has been developed and circulated by the President of the Assembly for inputs and comments.

IV. Strategic engagement of Africa in the sixth session of the Environment Assembly

15. The sixth session of the Assembly will require the effective engagement of all African countries to shape the environmental agenda and contribute towards efforts aimed at tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. African countries need to explore ways in which they can work with countries in other regions of the world to achieve the objective of the theme.

16. With universal membership of the Environment Assembly, the membership of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was expanded. The Committee of Permanent Representatives currently has most delegations accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme based in Nairobi while others are based in Geneva, Addis Ababa and New York. African governments which are yet to be accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme are encouraged to consider getting accreditation at locations of their convenience.

17. It should be recalled that several decisions of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment have subsequently gone on to be adopted at the Environment Assembly hence drawing global attention to the priorities of the region. Therefore, Africa's strategic and active engagement in

the work of the Environment Assembly should ensure that the interests of the region are well addressed and prioritized in terms of follow up and implementation.

18. Building Africa regional consensus on the role of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme in decision-making and implementation of environmental agenda will continue to be discussed and the region's voice is critical in this regard. The nineteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment needs to pronounce itself with clear messages on the theme of the Assembly, that feed into regional and global processes.

19. The above should contribute to strengthening African countries' continued engagement and participation in the work of United Nations Environment Assembly.

V. Participation of Africa in the sixth session of the Environment Assembly

20. It is expected that the African region will actively participate and engage in dialogue in all the deliberations of the sixth session of the Assembly at the technical, ministerial and civil society levels. The nineteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, therefore, provides an opportunity for the African region to prepare itself with regard to its effective participation in the sixth session of the Assembly.

21. The President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, H.E. Ms. Leila Benali, Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco, has already initiated the preparation of the ministerial declaration (through a letter dated 8 May 2023), of which she would like to receive regional and national contributions during its development and build consensus in accordance with the roadmap sent on 4 May 2023.

22. The President of the Assembly also strongly encourages Member States to submit draft resolutions for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its sixth session, preferably at least ten weeks in advance of the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, taking into account the theme of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly and the limited time and resources available for the negotiation of the resolutions during the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.

23. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to seize the opportunity of this nineteenth ordinary session in Addis Ababa, to discuss their contribution to the resolutions and ministerial declaration that will be adopted at the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.

24. Through the Conference, Africa should also articulate issues that are pertinent to the region, in addition to the theme of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution".

VI. Recommendations

25. It is, therefore, recommended that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its nineteenth ordinary session prioritises the following suggested areas within the context of the theme of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly:

(a) Substantive issues and solutions related to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution in Africa.

(b) Inputs for the draft ministerial declaration as circulated by the President of the Environment Assembly to member States.

(c) Areas where Africa would like to sponsor resolutions in the context of the theme of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.

(d) Other matters of interest to Africa that need the attention of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.