



AMCEN



AU



UNEP

Distr.: Limited
17 August 2023

Original: English
English and French only

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Nineteenth session

Ministerial meeting

Addis Ababa, 17 and 18 August 2023

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

Consideration of the draft declaration, decisions and key messages of the session

Draft elements: Addis Ababa declaration on seizing opportunities and enhancing collaboration to address environmental challenges in Africa

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 August 2023 at the nineteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Committed to continuing to take environment and climate action to unlock inclusive wealth creation that safeguards the socioeconomic well-being of the people in Africa,

Aware that the increased loss of biodiversity and threatened species will undermine our efforts to protect biodiversity, and of the need to take urgent action to preserve ecosystem services vital to human well-being, including crop pollination, water purification, food security, clean air, flood protection and carbon sequestration,

Acknowledging the warning from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, that the African region has lost 65 per cent of its productive land over the last 70 years, whereas the population has grown at least sixfold over the same period,

Appreciating the work of the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and regional economic communities, among others, in the development of continental and regional strategies and programmes on the sustainable blue economy as a significant contributor to continental transformation and growth,

Recalling paragraph (i) (i) of the annex to decision 18/3 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on biodiversity, wildlife and desertification, in which the Conference noted that land degradation, desertification and drought were priorities in Africa, and recognizing that the environment plays a strategic and critical role in providing practical, affordable and innovative solutions to bridge gaps in the socioeconomic development of Africa,

Bis Recognizing that the Congo Basin, the world's first largest ecological respiratory organ for our planet and significantly important in terms of carbon storage, plays a crucial role in global climate regulation and the provision of ecosystem services for the benefit of people,

* AMCEN/19/1.

Ter Taking note of resolution 4/16 of the United Nations Environment Assembly which recognizes that peatlands contain a high proportion of organic carbon, making them one of the world's largest carbon sinks, contributing to the mitigation of global climate change,

Quater Considering the benefits and values of Congo Basin peatlands, which sequester more than 31 billion tonnes of carbon and provide vital ecosystem functions and services that reduce the magnitude and mitigate the impact of floods and droughts, preserve biodiversity and provide food and water supplies.

Guided by the outcomes of previous sessions of the Conference in its 37 years of existence,

Guided also by the decisions of the Assembly of the African Union that have provided leadership to the Conference on African policy on environment, climate change and development matters,

Acknowledging the contribution to African development of the various global outcomes on environment and sustainable development,

Noting with appreciation the progress made and aware of the constraints faced in implementing the decisions of the Conference,

Recalling the outcomes of the resumed eighteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the commitment to provide policy direction and momentum in the implementation of the African Green Stimulus Programme and the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan, as important complementary initiatives for achieving Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Determined to strengthen our efforts and actions to strengthen implementation of our decisions as a contribution to the achievement of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals,

Hereby declare our resolve:

1. To commit ourselves to continuing to address and find solutions to environmental challenges that the African continent faces and to take advantage of the opportunities available to advance national and regional sustainable development agendas;
2. To commit ourselves to continuing to strengthen the role of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as the principal forum for advancing collective national and regional environmental policies and actions and to take concrete action to implement our decisions,
3. To reiterate our commitment to collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme as a viable and catalytic tool fostering multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges;
4. To reaffirm our commitment to supporting the work of the African Forum of Environment Protection Agencies and, in this regard, to endorse its blueprint, which establishes a common operational framework for the Forum;
5. To welcome resolution 2023/6 adopted by the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to strengthen collaboration with the African Ministerial Conference on Environment and call on the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic Commission for Africa to facilitate targeted work and joint meetings of the two ministerial bodies on key environment and development priorities for Africa, including strengthening engagement with legislative organs and institutions to advocate financing for sustainable development, climate action, mobilizing green finance, carbon credits, the circular economy, the blue economy, marine protection and biodiversity conservation, critical minerals, natural capital, addressing negative impacts and reducing environmental risks;
6. To endeavour to institute national and regional strategies to minimize environmental impacts in the extraction and processing of critical mineral resources so as to minimize environmental impacts and contribute to the global goals of mitigating climate change, protecting ecosystems and promoting sustainable development;
7. To call upon member States to consider prioritizing environmental policies that lower environmental degradation risks and to assess the environmental impacts and trade-offs in the mining, processing and refinement of critical minerals as the world transitions to clean energy;
8. To commit ourselves to taking appropriate measures to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through updating or revising national biodiversity strategies and action plans or national targets, and through joint advocacy efforts to ensure that the

biodiversity finance gap of \$700 billion per year is closed in full, and that international financial flows to developing countries are increased to at least \$20 billion per year by 2025 and ultimately increased to at least \$100 billion per year;

9. To recall decision 18/3 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on biodiversity, wildlife and desertification, which established the African group of negotiators on wildlife, and to request the Africa Union Commission to submit the terms of reference for that group for consideration at the twentieth session of the Conference;

10. To urge member States to ratify, at the earliest feasible date, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;¹

11. To stress the urgent need to implement the *Africa Blue Economy Strategy*² of the African Union and to request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations agencies and regional economic communities to support member States in developing and strengthening implementation of national strategies towards exploiting sustainable, resilient and equitable blue economy potential;

12. To highlight the importance of implementing the pledge to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use;³ and, recalling that African adherents to the pledge are committed to seeking transparency through the development of a Glasgow Declaration accountability framework as a means of driving global progress and promoting greater equity between forest protection standards, to call for resources to be mobilized for its implementation;

13. To recall decision 18/3 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, to appreciate the work of the African Group of Negotiators and to support the African position on the establishment of a legally binding instrument to address drought during the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification to be held in Riyadh from 2 to 13 December 2024;

14. To call upon the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Development Agency, the African Union Commission and other partners, together with member States, to fast-track the implementation of the African Green Stimulus Programme and synergies between the Programme and the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan;

15. To encourage international financial institutions, in particular regional institutions, to support the implementation of the African Green Stimulus Programme and to take it into consideration in their future programming;

16. To take note of the progress made in the implementation of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform and to call on the African Union Development Agency, the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and partner institutions to work collectively towards a successful third session of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform;

17. To ensure that ministers for the environment and ministers for finance and economic planning counterparts taking action together to fast-track resource mobilization for effective implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative;

18. To commit ourselves to a common African position so as to advance African priorities and interests in the negotiations of the beyond 2020 global chemicals and waste framework and at the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management;

19. To endorse the establishment of the African group of negotiators on chemicals and waste management, taking into consideration the dimensions of gender and youth;

20. To express our appreciation to the African group of negotiators on plastic pollution for effectively representing Africa at the first and second sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, held from 28 November to 2 December 2022 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and from 29 May to 2 June 2023 in Paris, respectively;

¹ A/CONF.232/2023/4.

² African Union–Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, *Africa Blue Economy Strategy* (Nairobi, 2019).

³ Available at <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230401054904/https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>.

21. To reaffirm our commitment to actively participating in the sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, so as to advance African interests and priorities;

22. To express our appreciation to the African group in Nairobi for its work in all negotiations during the intersessional period and during the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly, as guided by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

23. To reaffirm our commitment to ensuring an effective multilateral approach for addressing climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, and reiterate our commitment to their implementation in line with the principles and provisions of the Convention, while emphasizing equitable access to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty;

24. To urge the African group to continue working with the parties and the presidency of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reach further decisions that recognize the special needs and circumstances of Africa;

Bis To intensify regional and international collaboration to promote a multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands in the Congo Basin, in line with Brazzaville 2018 declaration; adopted at the third meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative partners;

25. To stress the importance of operationalizing the global goal on adaptation at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties, including adopting decisions on global adaptation targets and indicators to facilitate adaptation action and increase the ability of parties to adapt to adverse impacts of climate change;

26. To urge developed-country parties to enhance their delivery of provisions of climate finance, to demonstrate progress in increasing scale and enhancing access to affordable resources and to deliver on their climate finance commitments, including financing for adaptation, taking into account the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that Africa would only require \$86 billion annually for adaptation by 2030;

27. To highlight the importance of establishing the mechanisms needed to ensure that Africa receives its fair share of provisions of support and flows of investments that are reflective of African needs and resources and deliver on African just transition pathways;

28. To emphasize the first global stocktake as one of the key outcomes of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties, offering a critical opportunity for the world to course-correct and address gaps across all elements of climate action, including adaptation, loss and damage, mitigation and response measures, and means of implementation and support, with a particular emphasis on equity and the best available science; while reiterating that the outcome of the global stocktake reflects the special development circumstances of Africa and provides the policy space necessary for Africa to achieve sustainable development and just transition to low-emission and resilient development;

29. To stress the importance of launching the loss and damage fund at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties through the provision of new and additional financial resources by developed-country parties and the identification of new sources, and to request the transitional committee of the loss and damage fund to be guided by the previous decisions of the Conference of the Parties while defining institutional arrangements, governance and eligibility for the fund;

30. To urge Parties to adopt a decision to facilitate equitable and just transition pathways to low emissions and climate-resilient development in line with article 2 of the Paris Agreement and to adopt a decision on a framework for financing the transitions of all African countries;

ALT: To congratulate Kenya and the African Union Commission for the upcoming inaugural Africa Climate Summit that will take place from the 4 to 6 September 2023 in Nairobi and take note of the report on its state of preparedness as presented by Kenya; and encourage all member states to work with the African Union Commission and Kenya to ensure successful outcomes of the Summit.

31. To take note of the ongoing initiatives to reform the multilateral financial system and support the need for Africa to access its fair share of financial resources through a pathway to a new global financial deal, and take into account the special needs and special circumstances of Africa;

Bis To Welcome the initiative of the Republic of Congo to organize in Brazzaville, the Summit "Amazon - Borneo - Mekong and Southeast Asia - Congo, Summit of the Three Basins of Ecosystems of Biodiversity and Tropical Forests (S3B EBFT)", in order to constitute, through the union of the three basins, a global alliance, biodiversity ecosystems and tropical forests, an Alliance/Coalition with a South-South governance, structuring the three global ecosystems that represent 80% of tropical forests around the world, bringing together 2/3 of terrestrial biodiversity and ensuring the vital role of global regulator of carbon balance and life on earth. The three basins are expected to capture 80% of the existing and future financial mobilization announced at COP 27 for climate and COP 15 for biodiversity.

32. To reaffirm our commitment to and support for the Climate for Development in Africa initiative, as mandated by the African Union in 2007 and endorsed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 2008, and to welcome the second phase of this initiative to be launched by the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank at the African Climate Summit in September 2023, and call on the Climate for Development in Africa partnership to scale up support for operationalization of the *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032)*;⁴

33. To acknowledge with appreciation that the Green Climate Fund has invested \$4.9 billion across 92 projects in Africa, with half going to adaptation, and to urge developed-country parties to provide enhanced climate finance for climate action in the light of the projected needs of developing countries reaching up to \$6 trillion for the pre-2030 period; and to call on developed-country parties to contribute new financial resources, representing progress and the highest possible ambition;

34. To call on the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners to strengthen engagement with subnational and local governments to scale up their support for and accelerate the implementation of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment decisions in the areas of climate action, including building climate resilience of the urban poor;

ALT: To call upon the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa to work with United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners in implementing African Ministerial Conference on the Environment decisions on climate actions in cities and subnational levels including on Building Climate Resilience of the Urban Poor.

35. To urge the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment secretariat to expedite the process of the review of the rules of procedure of the Conference and to report on progress at the twentieth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

36. To call upon the United Nations Environment Assembly at its sixth session to consider adopting a resolution on fostering national action to address environmental challenges through increased cooperation and convergence of action between the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements to promote cooperation and coherence in, and contributions to, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

37. To request civil society and the private sector in Africa to continue playing a more active role in the sustainable development and protection of the environment of the continent as part of the work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

We also:

38. Commit ourselves to engaging with the relevant national authorities to ensure sustainable financial contributions from member States to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment trust fund and environment fund;

39. Urge member States to support the United Nations Environment Programme through more stable, adequate and predictable core contributions to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment trust fund and environment fund, with due consideration for the voluntary indicative scale of contributions;

40. Stress the need for the United Nations Environment Programme to diversify its donor base;

⁴ African Union, *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032)* (Nairobi, 2022).

41. Extend our appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme and urge its Executive Director to continue to provide support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
42. Thank Senegal for its presidency of the Conference during the period 2022–2023 and welcome the presidency of Ethiopia for the period 2023–2025;
43. Express our profound appreciation to the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and other development partners and institutions for their continued support for the work of the Conference;
44. Mandate the President of the Conference to submit the report of the nineteenth session of the Conference, including the present Addis Ababa declaration on seizing opportunities and enhancing collaboration to address environmental challenges in Africa and the annexes thereto, to the African Union Commission for further action by the policy organs of the African Union;
45. Also mandate the President of the Conference to convey the priorities and positions contained in the present declaration and the decisions, key messages and report of the nineteenth session of the Conference to all parties, including partners and organizations, with a view to enlisting their support and collaboration, and to report thereon to the Conference at its twentieth session;
46. Pay tribute to His Excellency Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Government of Ethiopia and the people of Ethiopia for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants, for the excellent facilities made available, and for the generosity extended to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its nineteenth session.
