

**SIXTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY**

STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP

**By H.E.Bacha Debele Buta, Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Nairobi
and Permanent Representative to UNEP and Habitat.**

Nairobi, 26 February 2024

Excellency Ms. Leila Benali, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of the Kingdom Morocco;

Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme;

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It is my honour and privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.
2. From the outset, allow me to express my profound gratitude to the Government and brotherly people of Kenya for the warm hospitality extended to all delegations.
3. Let me also take this opportunity to commend the Bureau of UNEA-6 for the excellent work done during the past two years under the able leadership of the Kingdom of Morocco. We would like also to commend Honourable Minister Leila Benali, for the achievement of a consensual Ministerial Declaration.
4. Furthermore, I would like to thank Madame Executive Director and her entire team for preparing excellent working documents and organization of this important gathering.

Madame President

5. The overall theme of UNEA-6 is: “**effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution**” this theme urges us to work together in tackling not only the challenges referred to, but also all global environmental challenges, that include desertification, land and soil degradation, drought and deforestation.

6. We are convening here for UNEA6 at a critical juncture where:

- The Climate crisis has escalated to a climate emergency amid the encouraging call to action at the recent COP28;
- Biodiversity is reducing at an alarming rate where CBD and COP15 adopts a framework to curb this situation,
- Our oceans, seas and water bodies are being choked with plastic where countries are striving to set ambitious targets,
- Desertification and land degradation threaten African countries, and compromise Development,
- Problematic chemicals and hazardous wastes continue to pollute our lands, where countries have been striving for legally binding agreement on plastic use.

In this vein, it is paramount to call all stakeholders to act and we indeed need to walk the talks right now by putting Environmental multilateralism as a principle.

Madame President

7. The impact of environmental challenges, such as land degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, drought and desertification, is more impactful and causes irreversible damages on human and animal life. they are not only compromising Africa's hard fault development gains but also hinder our efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.
8. We believe that it is the right time to ensure the fulfilment of global financial pledges, so as to provide adequate means of implementation that enables African countries to meet their commitments under various Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

Madame President

9. The 19th Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) held in August 2023 under Ethiopia's Presidency adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration and several other decisions. Allow me to recall that African ministers in charge of the environment called for true multilateralism for the implementation of different multilateral environmental agreements and the operationalization of global environmental commitments. We acknowledge UNEP's role and we further call UNEP and the international community to cooperate with and support African member states for the implementation of AMCEN decisions.

Madame president

10. We are in a time of urgent situation where we need collective response and commitment to address global environmental challenges through the principles of environmental multilateralism, with the United Nations Environment Program at its centre.
11. It's our firm believes that only a collective response and dedication can address global environmental challenges, taking into consideration our common but differentiated responsibilities as well as respective capabilities. The Group therefore, call on the international community to demonstrate solidarity with Africa to support our efforts to address environmental challenges.
12. Finally, The African Group would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to continue participating actively in this sixth session and looks forward to the adoption of impactful outcomes that will help our continent in addressing the global environment challenges, as well as, the implementation.

I thank you