

PRE-AMCEN MAJOR GROUP AND STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM/ ROAD TO PARIS CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP

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CONCEPT NOTE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

AMCEN was created in 1985 in Cairo. 30 years after, AMCEN is going back to its birthplace for the first time, having steered environmental governance across the continent and inspired action and change. To recognize this important symbol, the 15th AMCEN session is under the slogan of “*1985-2015: From Cairo to Cairo, 30 years of environmental stewardship*”.

The fifteenth session of AMCEN to be held from 2-6 March 2015 at the Dusit Thani Lakeview Hotel in Cairo city, Arab Republic of Egypt, will focus on harnessing Africa's natural capital, taking into consideration the region's diverse biodiversity and ecosystems. Accordingly, the session will be held under the theme: "*Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*".

This session is being held in a crucial year for global and regional action to secure our global future. The meeting comes at the heels of the 20th UNFCCC Conference held in Lima – Peru from 1st – 12th December, 2014 and also at a time when the African Civil Society is gearing its momentum towards the 21st UNFCCC COP to be held in Paris France. The world is also engaged into critical negotiations that will lead to the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda, including a set of Sustainable Development Goals that will chart a path for the next generation of development. Leading policy makers on environment drawn from various African countries will deliberate on substantive issues of importance to Africa as a follow-up to the key outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit as well as the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, and the outcomes of UNEA of (UNEP).

African Governments acknowledge that the on-going climate change discussions and post-2015 SDGs negotiations have entered a critical stage towards the twin agreements in 2015 and the Cairo AMCEN meeting will be an opportune platform to review issues at stake for the continent and agree on the key messages to be used as a basis for the region's standpoints.

Also top on the agenda will be discussions on illegal trade in wildlife on biodiversity and ecosystems and the reawakening this has triggered across sectors and regions. During the June 2014 Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the African Heads of State and Government adopted a decision on the African Wild Flora and Fauna Conservation and Illegal Trade in Wildlife, preceded earlier by another milestone achieved during the First ever United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in June 2014 under UNEP's enhanced mandate.

This, in a nutshell, brought at fore the crucial role played by Governments and all relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, civil society and the private sector in combatting illegal trade in wildlife, and affirms Member States' determination to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade and wildlife products. To turn declarations into practice and practical actions, AMCEN-15 will come up with a framework to guide each Actor in the next two years.

The Cairo AMCEN Session is expected to be a turning point, and an important moment to watch for those in Africa who are looking forward to a future international climate change agreement and a post 2015 development agenda that are responsive to African realities, aspirations, and priorities.

Over years, AMCEN has distinguished itself as common platform where Civil Society and governments exchange information and constructively challenges each other's standpoints until they come up with positions touching on environment that have made Africa the most solidified negotiating block in international dialogue processes. The Pre-AMCEN Civil Society Consultative workshops convened by PACJA, which have since 2009 evolved as civil society segments of AMCEN, and have livened the Ministerial Forum into not only a Governmental process, but a 21st Forum conscious of the changing times and the role other stakeholders play in policy making processes.

As a key actor, PACJA sees AMCEN-15 as an opportunity to contribute towards Africa's sustainable development agenda. It is imperative that African governments together with civil society exchange experiences and strategies to carry the voice of African peoples forward, especially the road to Paris, framing the narrative of green economy in the context of sustainable development, poverty eradication and ensuring African issues are reflected in Post 2015 Agenda/consultations.

This meeting will also afford African CSOs an opportunity to contribute to the continent agenda on effective stewardship of the continent's natural capital and efforts at combating illegal trade in wildlife. PACJA's strategic positioning in the AMCEN process has the Pre-AMCEN Civil Society Consultative Workshop as a key distinct activity that is aimed at achieving the aforementioned objectives.

2.0 JUSTIFICATION

Africa has a lot at stake in this important year for global climate change dialogue process with COP 21 in Paris concluding a 4-year process to deliver a global climate deal that will include all countries that are party to the Climate Change Convention; and the Post-2015 development paradigm requires concerted efforts, and robust engagement by all stakeholders – Governments, civil society and development partners. It is imperative that African governments, civil society and other stakeholders find common platforms to exchange experiences and strategies to articulate the popular African people demands and positions, especially framing the narrative of people-centered climate and development models that are consistent with science and community realities.

Hosting the workshop at the sidelines of AMCEN is a recognition of the need to strengthen African CSO's analysis and contributions to respond in a timely and resolute manner to these key issues, focusing in particular on the role they must play vis á vis governments and related inter-governmental institutions, such as African Union, UNEP, UNECA and Regional Integration Economic Blocs, etc¹. It is also in further recognition of the need, potentials, and contributions of CSOs to the processes that there is a compelling reason to tap the expertise and organizational capacity existing in sectors as trade, finance, food security, ecological debt, human rights, wildlife and biodiversity, the rights of indigenous peoples and gender equality to bear in the processes.

This year's Pre-AMCEN African Civil Society Consultative cum Road to Paris Civil Society Consultative workshop will be held on 1st March, 2015 and will be hosted jointly by PACJA and UNEP-Regional Office for Africa. The main goal will be to foster unities and collective campaigning efforts among African CSOs (both at national and at sectoral/continental level) so as to contribute decisively to the development

¹ PACJA has been a close partner of UNEP-Regional office for Africa, which serves as the Secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. By strategically hosting the CS workshop at the sidelines of AMCEN, participants will be able to interact with Government and other actors, and thus contribute to the agenda and ultimate policy positions of the African governments.

of new discourse, parameters, advocacy, and movement building that will contribute to effective, equitable, and participatory solutions that address the causes and impacts of Africa's development challenges.

3. OBJECTIVES

- Deepen and broaden common understanding, analysis and advocacies on climate change COP-21, Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (environmental sustainability), Management of Africa's natural capital, combatting illegal trade in wildlife among African civil society organizations.
- Strengthen common platform and campaign plans for African CSOs unified actions as well as Major Groups' engagement in UNEP/UNEA.
- Develop a common vision on key issues on AMCEN's agenda.

Specific objectives

- Develop a common assessment and analysis of international climate change dialogue processes, outcomes and consultations, and emerging trends and issues, and forging common positions and strategies for the way forward
- Provide holistic analysis of the latest Open Working Group on SDGs' Environmental Sustainability Goal, and explore whether a stand-alone (or integrated) goal on climate change would be the best option for Africa in the ongoing debate on Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- Develop assessment and analysis on Africa's effort to address illegal wildlife and biodiversity trade as a way of natural resource conservation and management.
- Strengthen common platform and campaign plans for African CSOs unified actions.
- Strengthen broad public participation in decision-making and strengthen the role of Major Groups in UNEP/UNEA.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- A Position/document that outlines ACS's stand and recommendations to the 15th Ordinary Session of AMCEN and its outcomes on climate change on the Road to Paris, the Post-2015 agenda and related SDGs, the management of Africa's natural capital, combatting illegal trade in wildlife among other key issues.
- An Understanding and synthesis of the report of the African CSOs Representatives in the UNEP Major Groups and way forward on continuous participation and strengthening partnership between Civil society and UNEP

5. PARTICIPANTS

Representatives from National Platforms, Sector-based Networks, Experts from working Groups, regional representatives Major Group Consultative meeting, and representatives of major groups including the youth, women, indigenous people etc.